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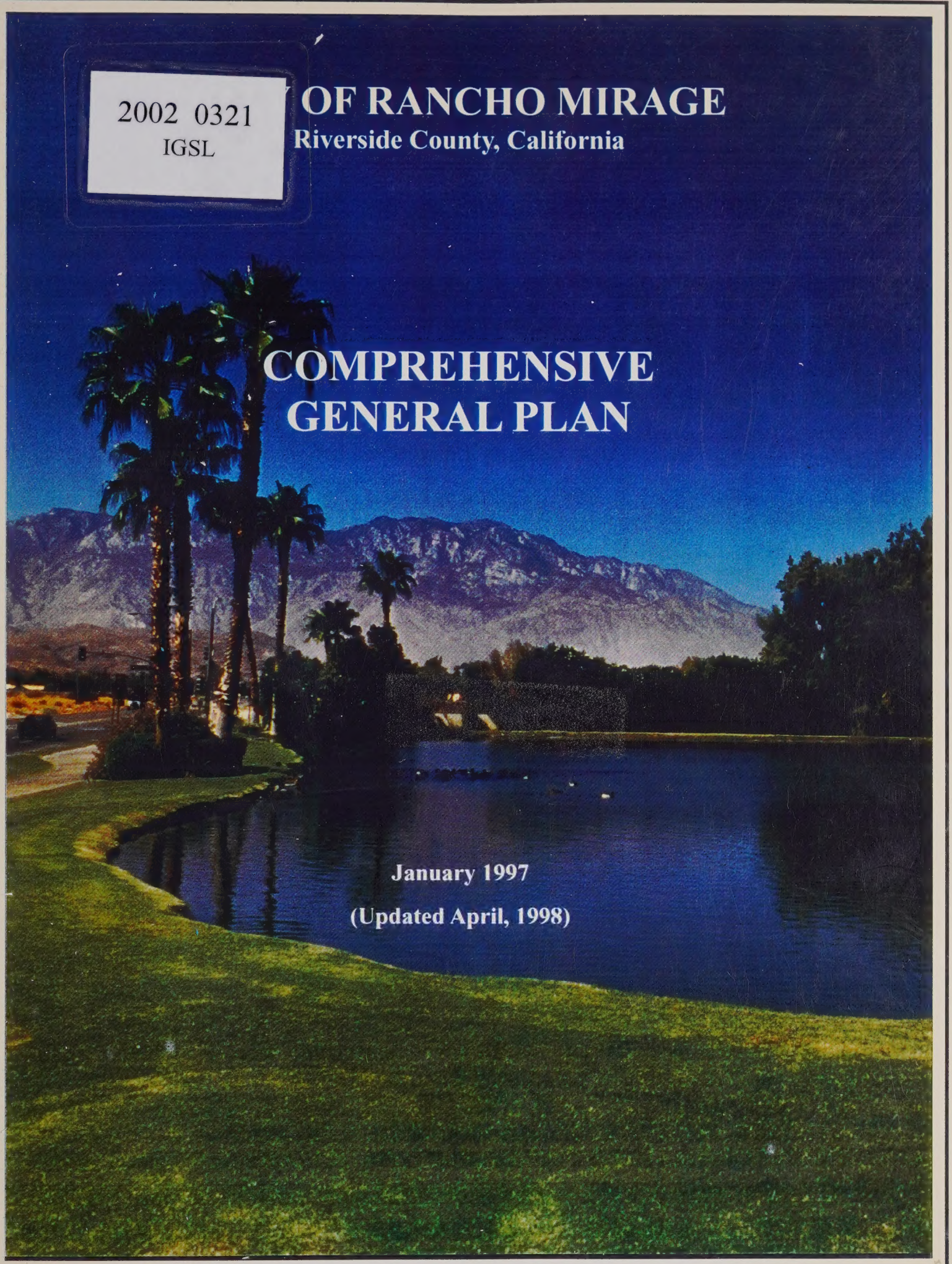

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

January 1997

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CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

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CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE
COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN I
Introduction I-1

II. ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION II
Administration Element II-1

III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT III
A. Land Use Element III-1
B. Circulation Element III-18
C. Housing Element III-36
D. Parks and Recreation Element III-65
E. Community Design Element III-75
F. Economic and Fiscal Element III-86

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES IV
A. Biological Resources Element IV-1
B. Archaeological and Historic Resources Element IV-12
C. Water Resources Element IV-19
D. Air Quality Element IV-26
E. Open Space and Conservation Element IV-32
F. Energy and Mineral Resources Element IV-39

V. ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS V
A. Geotechnical Element V-1
B. Flooding and Hydrology Element V-13
C. Noise Element V-20
D. Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element V-32

VI. PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES VI
A. Water, Sewer and Utilities Element VI-1
B. Fire and Police Protection Element VI-8
C. Schools and Libraries Element VI-12
D. Health Services Element VI-15
E. Emergency Preparedness Element VI-17
F. Public Building and Facilities Element VI-20
G. Arts, and Culture Element VI-25

VII. GLOSSARY VII
Glossary VII-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

Page

VIII. APPENDIX VIII
Appendix A:Implementation Programs A-1

EXHIBITS

I-I City Boundary Map I-4

III-1 City of Rancho Mirage Existing Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Volumes III-23
III-2 City of Rancho Mirage Street Cross Sections III-24
III-3 General Plan Buildout Traffic Assignments III-29
III-4 City Roadway Circulation Map III-30
III-5 Parks Master Plan III-72
III-6 Bikepaths/Sidewalks III-73
III-7 Horse/Hiking Trails III-74
IV-1 Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Habitat and Associated Areas IV-5
IV-2 Rancho Mirage General Plan: Locations of Special Status Species IV-7
IV-3 Rancho Mirage General Plan: Land Ownership & Reserves Within City Limits and Sphere of Influence IV-11

V-1 Faults In The Rancho Mirage General Plan Area V-6
V-2 Seismically Induced Rock Falls and Landslide Susceptibility V-9
V-3 Wind Erosion Hazard Zones in the Rancho Mirage Area V-10
V-4 Flood Zones and Water Reservoirs in the General Plan Area V-17
V-5 City of Rancho Mirage Noise Monitoring Sites V-27

VI-1 Water Service VI-2
VI-2 Sewer Service VI-4
VI-3 Public Facilities VI-22

TABLES

III-1 City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Proposed Land Use Designations III-2
III-2 City of Rancho Mirage Statistical Summary of Land Uses III-8
III-3 Commercial Land Use Development Potential III-13
III-4 Level of Service Description III-20
III-5 General Plan Road Analysis Preferred Land Use Alternative III-26
III-6 Intersection Levels of Service/Capacity III-28
III-7 Age Distribution, 1990 . . . . . III-39
III-8 Ethnic Characteristics-1980 and 1990 . . . . . III-39
III-9 Population Growth-1985 to 1995 . . . . . III-40
III-10 Major Employers-1995 . . . . . III-40
III-11 Housing Characteristics, 1990 . . . . . III-40
III-12 Housing Characteristics, 1995 . . . . . III-40
III-13 Vacancy Status-1990 . . . . . III-41

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

Page

TABLES

III-14	Housing Tenure-1990	III-41
III-15	Overcrowding Owner-Occupied Units-1990	III-41
III-16	Overcrowding Renter-Occupied Units-1990	III-41
III-17	Households Earnings 80% of Median Income or Less, Paying 30% or More of Gross Income for Shelter by Tenure-1988	III-41
III-18	Total Lower Income Households Overpaying for Shelter 1988	III-42
III-19	Percentage of Household Income Spent on Housing:Owner Occupied Units-1990.	III-42
III-20	Percentage of Household Income Spent on Housing:Renter Occupied Units-1990.	III-42
III-21	1980 and 1990 Median Housing Prices	III-42
III-22	1990 Rancho Mirage Median Income Affordability	III-42
III-23	1995 Rancho Mirage Median Income Affordability Gap	III-43
III-24	1995 County of Riverside Housing Program Income Limits	III-43
III-25	Mobilehome Park Condition Survey Results-1992	III-44
III-26	Mobilehome Park Structural Condition of Coaches, 1994	III-44
III-27A	Future Housing Needs by Income Category 1989-1994	III-45
III-27B	New Housing Units by Income Category 1989-1998	III-45
III-27C	Future Housing Needs by Income Category, Unadjusted 1996-2001	III-45
III-28	Future Housing Needs by Income Category 1996-2001, Adjusted for Permanent Population	III-46
III-29	Quantified Objectives Matrix 1996-2001	III-47
III-30	Demographic Characteristics of The Elderly-1990 (Age 65 and Over)	III-50
III-31	Demographic Characteristics of The Desert Aids Project Clients-1996	III-51
III-32	Representative Apartment Market Rates in Rancho Mirage, 1995	III-52
III-33	Residential Land Use Categories	III-53
III-34	Vacant Acreage Residential Buildout-1996	III-53
III-35	1995-96 Set-aside Fund Expenditures for Affordable Housing Projects	III-54
III-36	Maximum Allowable Density Bonus for Affordable Housing Projects	III-55
III-37	Residential Development Standards Minimum Area Requirements for Residential Zones	III-56
III-38	Minimum Development Standards for Residential Zones	III-57
III-39	Minimum Room Size	III-58
III-40	Minimum Area Requirement for Affordable Housing Project	III-58
III-41	Development Fees-City of Rancho Mirage-1996	III-59
III-42	City of Rancho Mirage Revenues	III-88
III-43	City of Rancho Mirage Expenditures	III-88
IV-1	Rancho Mirage Species of Special Concern	IV-6
IV-2	Historic Sites/Structures in Rancho Mirage	IV-17
IV-3	Calculation of Overdraft (1993) Whitewater River Subbasin Management Area	IV-21
IV-4	Mineral Analysis of Representative Surface Waters	IV-23

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

Page

Exhibits

IV-5 State and Federal Ambient Air Quality Standards IV-29
IV-6 Designated Open Space Lands City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Study Area IV-34
V-1 Major Drainage Channels V-15
V-2 Community Noise & Land Use Compatibility V-24
V-3 Noise Monitoring @ Selected Sites Locations and CNEL Values (1996) V-26
V-4 1996 and General Plan Buildout Projected Noise Contours on Major Roadways (Distance to CNEL Contours in Feet from Centerline) V-28

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN

This introductory chapter of the General Plan provides the broadest overview of the General Plan, what it is, what information it contains and how it should be used. The chapter also summarizes the City's history and important features. The size of the planning area, the state of existing development and the community's valuable resources are also summarized and maps of the region and City boundaries are provided. The relationship of the General Plan to the Environmental Impact Report is explained.

INTRODUCTION

RANCHO MIRAGE COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

All incorporated towns and cities, and all counties are required by the California Government Code to prepare comprehensive, long-term general plans, which direct development of the community. As an official document of the City of Rancho Mirage, the General Plan provides the goals, policies, programs and implementation strategies to guide the development of the City and to preserve its valued assets and resources. In addition to goals and policies, the General Plan includes issues discussions, diagrams and maps, tables and charts that provide direction for the prudent and conscientious management of future development.

This section of the General Plan describes the City of Rancho Mirage and its composition. It also describes the planning area which includes the City limits, and the regional context and long-term perspective taken by the City in developing this document. Finally, this brief chapter provides an overview of the General Plan and the Environmental Impact Report, and their role as the principal development guides for community development.

City of Rancho Mirage

The City of Rancho Mirage comprises an important resort-residential enclave, an institutional and administrative services center, with community-scale commercial and business centers serving the City and surrounding communities. Located at the center of the Cove Communities of the Coachella Valley in Riverside County, the City is a transitional area between a more intense tourist commercial base to the northwest and the more sedate resort residential and agricultural communities to the southeast. The City also sits in a pivotal position in the setting of governmental policy for such issues as public safety and the conservation and preservation of our City's environment. The extremes in climate and the high geological activity of the region have shaped Rancho Mirage and given it unique and valued characteristics that warrant our appreciation and protection.

It was not until the latter part of the 19th century that substantial settlement by Europeans took place in the Coachella Valley. For millennia before that time, Native Indians of the Serrano and associated clans, and their ancestors, shared this region and its resources. It was not until the middle 20th century that Rancho Mirage began to expand into a city. Today, it is a center for medical treatment and research, it is a preferred residential commun-ity and an emerging business address.

The City of Rancho Mirage encompasses 15,701± acres or over 24.5 square miles. The City's Sphere-of-Influence (SOI), County managed lands over which the City has an advisory role, totals another 9 square miles. Development over the past decades has focused along State Highway 111, with progressively less dense and more scattered residential development north and south of Highway 111. New residential and resort development has been predominantly north of the Whitewater Wash, with further development to the south constrained by terrain. Newly annexed lands provide an opportunity for community-scale commer-cial and a wide range of residential densities, with industrial lands located adjacent to the Interstate-10/ Southern Pacific Railroad rights-of-way. Unincorporated City SOI lands are located both north and south of Interstate-10, and extend north to Edom Hill Peak.

The City has taken shape in a widening low desert valley ranging from one too about six miles wide. The Santa Rosa Mountains on our south and Edom Hill on the City's north frame the developing valley floor and provide valuable viewsheds. The City is a geographically and biologically important location, where significantly differing wildlife habitat, landscape and geology meet.

This General Plan for Rancho Mirage reflects the City's appreciation for the quality of life the community has to offer and a determination to protect it. The Plan also reflects and acts on the new opportunities for community and economic development. As part of a strategy to broaden the City's economic base, the primary resources which gave birth to the City must be protected. Simply, the community's highest values go hand in hand;

appreciating and protecting the built and natural environments are two sides of the same coin.

The General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

The Comprehensive General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have been developed to serve as a framework for decision-making regarding the appropriate types, intensities and conditions by which development is to be permitted in the City. The process of preparing these documents must involve thoughtful and extensive community consultation, including the identification of issues, the development of goals, policies, and programs. It also involves the consideration of various alternatives, the consensus selection of a preferred course of action, and finally, the development of strategies to implement the General Plan.

As required by state law, each jurisdiction must prepare and adopt a General Plan and supporting documentation to provide the basis for the community's development. The City of Rancho Mirage identifies the environmental, social and economic goals, and sets forth policies, standards, programs and implementation strategies for existing and future development. The General Plan also provides the framework to analyze and respond to changing circumstances as the City evolves.

The background information and issues are summarized in the General Plan and are discussed in greater depth in the General Plan EIR. Therefore, both documents provide City officials and the general public with vital information necessary to make informed decisions. The General Plan and the EIR also serve as the basis for subsequent planning efforts, including the preparation of Specific Plans and special environmental and planning studies.

The General Plan Process

The City's previous General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1986-87 and adopted in November 1987. Based upon a need to respond to recent social, economic, physical and political conditions, City Council determined that a comprehensive update to the General Plan was necessary. In March 1995, the City Council approved a process for the review and updating of the General Plan, which included proposed community participation objectives and techniques, a proposed committee to recommend General Plan goals and policies, an identification of needed staff and consultant resources, and a preliminary schedule and budget.

The Community Profile

In anticipation of the need to provide a comprehensive collection of factual information about Rancho Mirage, the Community Profile was released in May 1995 to participants in the General Plan process. The Community Profile, prepared by the City's Community Development Department in association with Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc., was made available to the general public in August 1995 as a background report on all aspects of the City's physical, economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions and their relationship to community planning. The document was used extensively as a reference by the General Plan Advisory Committee in their deliberations on the updated General Plan.

General Plan Advisory Committee

The City Council appointed a fifteen-member General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to serve as the primary means of citizen involvement in the formulation of the General Plan. Beginning in May 1995, the GPAC met two or three times monthly to discuss and review General Plan elements and their goals, policies and programs. The GPAC also took two City-wide field trips and conducted one community workshop in an effort to obtain a better understanding of community conditions and opinions.

Between May 1995 and June 1996, the General Plan Advisory Committee held 33 public meetings during which staff and consultant presentations were followed by preliminary votes to adopt, modify or reject proposed goals, policies and programs. The proposed land use map designations received the most amount of citizen input and GPAC discussion during the meetings. Special newspaper notices were published and notices were mailed to affected property owners in an effort to inform the public of proposed land use changes to be considered in the General Plan. The GPAC received the draft Plan in July 1996 and transmitted their final recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for their review and adoption.

General Plan Format

The General Plan is organized into five major chapters: Administration, Community Development, Environmental Resources, Environmental Hazards, and Public Services and Facilities. Within each chapter are the various General Plan elements and their accompanying background information, goals, policies and programs.

Goals, Policies and Programs

Each element contains at least one goal statement and related policy statements and programs. A goal in the General Plan is the most general statement of community values expressed as a desirable end state condition to be achieved in the future. The heart of the General Plan is contained within its policy statements. Policies further refine the goal statements and provide a clear direction for decision-making. Policies include "shall" statements to provide unequivocal directives. Decision-making criteria, major development standards and funding priorities are best established by clear General Plan policies. General Plan programs are included as implementation measures needed to carry out related policy statements. Programs provide the basis for scheduling and assigning staff and other resources to specific actions which are needed to implement certain directives of the Plan.

The maps and graphics which are included in the General Plan illustrate policies. For example, the land use map represents a series of policies for the type and intensity of future development to occur at various locations throughout the City.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

General Plan Update 1996

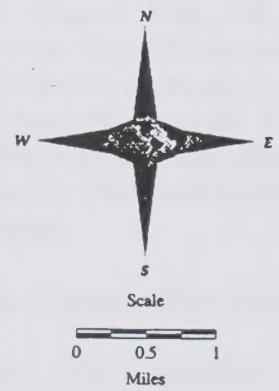
Legend

- Major Streets
- City Boundary
- Toe- Slope
- Storm Channel
- Section Lines
- 35 Section Numbers
- Sphere of Influence

Source: Planning Division

Total City Size:
≈ 24.5 sq. miles (15,700 Ac.)

Total Sphere Size:
≈ 8.5 sq. miles (5,500 Ac.)



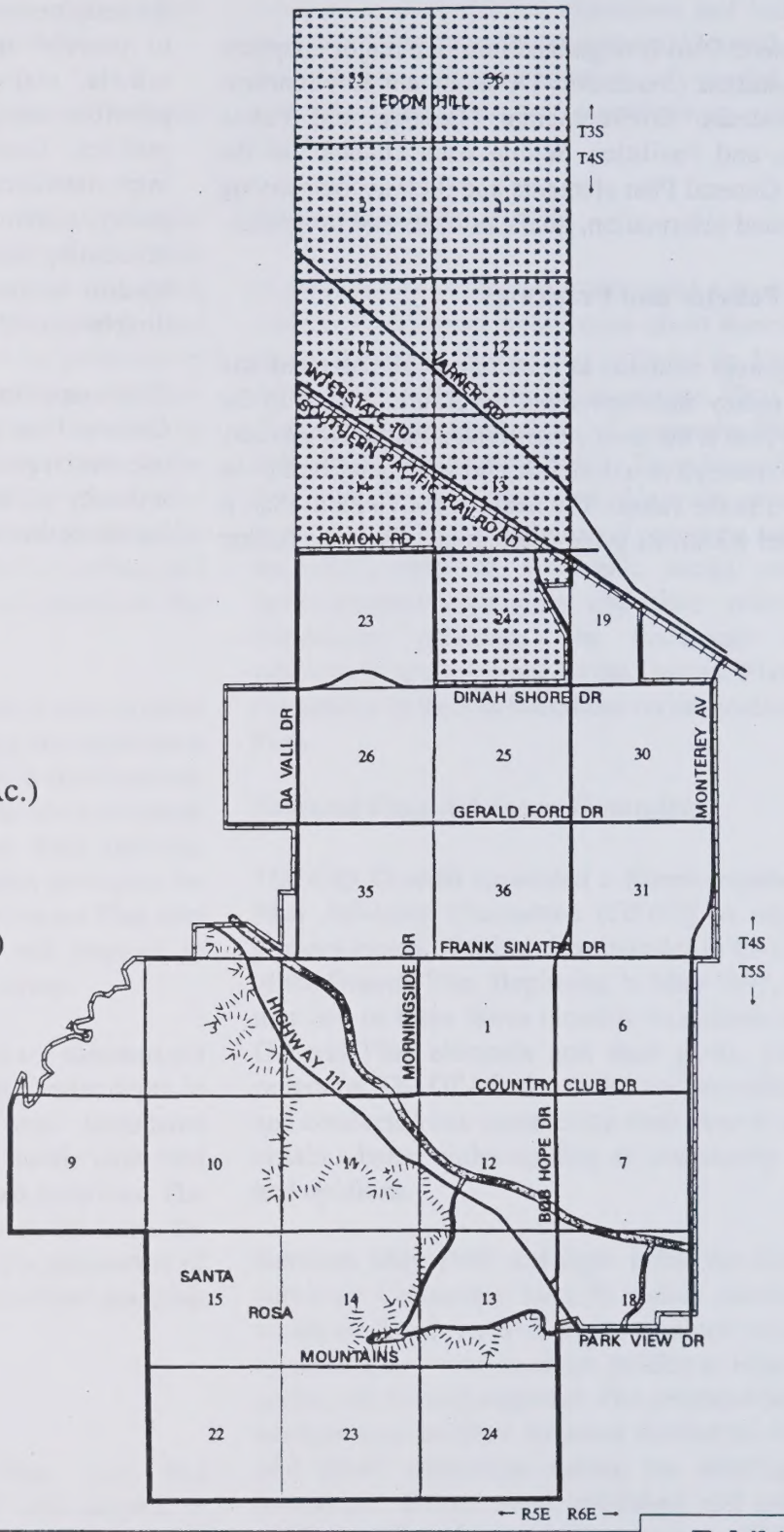


Exhibit I-1

City Boundary Map

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER II

ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Chapter of the General Plan addresses the administration of the General Plan, through the Administration and Implementation Element. Key discussions in this element include the format and content of the General Plan, the various chapters and elements, determining consistency with the General Plan, amending the General Plan, purpose and scope of Specific Plans, and other means of implementing the Plan. The Specific Plan plays an important role as a refined version of the General Plan applicable to specific portions of the City. Other components and aspects of the General Plan are also discussed in the Administration and Implementation Element, including environmental resource and hazard maps, design concepts, and procedural matters.

ADMINISTRATION ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Administration Element provides background on the information set forth in the General Plan, its organization, the Plan's function and its relationship to other regulatory documents, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Subdivision Map Act, and the City Zoning Ordinance. The Administration Element also describes General Plan review and amendment procedures. It is the intent of this Element to describe the various means by which the General Plan is implemented, including Element-specific implementation strategies, which are incorporated throughout the General Plan. The Element also sets forth a goal, policies and programs intended to effectively administer the General Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Administration Element provides for the periodic review and amendment of the General Plan, establishing formal procedures to ensure that the Plan is maintained and kept current with changing conditions, and that it continues to reflect the goals of the community as a whole. The Element also facilitates the review and processing of land use and development proposals, the appropriateness of which is determined through a review of applicable policies and standards for consistency with the General Plan.

California Government Code (Section 65300) requires that incorporated communities and counties prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan which regulates the physical development of lands under the jurisdiction of, or having an influence upon, the community, including the City's legally recognized Sphere-of-Influence. The General Plan and its various elements are required to function as an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies (Government Code Section 65300.5).

It is also recognized that special local conditions and circumstances must be accommodated and that the General Plan may take differing forms, while meeting its minimum requirements (Government Code Section 65300.7). The General Plan must be designed to be responsive to the variations in community size and density, fiscal and administrative capabilities, land use and development issues, and the needs of each community's residents (Government Code Sections 65300.9, 65302).

Format and Content

The Rancho Mirage General Plan is organized into five major chapters: Administration, Community Development, Environmental Resources, Environmental Hazards, and Public Services and Facilities. Within each chapter are the various General Plan Elements, providing background information and related issues, goals and specific policies.

The Rancho Mirage General Plan is strongly supported by programs set forth in each element that reflect the community's proactive philosophy of local government. These have been consolidated and elaborated upon to provide implementation strategies to facilitate long-term planning and infrastructure development.

Goals, Policies, Programs and Implementation Strategies

The General Plan goals are developed as broad statements reflecting the City's values, aims and aspirations. These goals address the physical development of the City, as well as the preservation of the community's important environmental and cultural assets. The policies have been developed to further the goals of the General Plan, and set forth specific performance requirements for each element. Programs accompanying the elements provide quantitative and qualitative targets, set forth the agencies most likely to carry out the program, and propose possible schedules for program implementation and review.

Maps and Graphics

Official maps, and graphics are incorporated into the General Plan to delineate land use and circulation patterns, scenic highways, community focal points, open space and recreation facilities, and areas requiring special consideration or study. Important or significant

environmental resource and hazard areas are also mapped, as well as public and quasi-public facilities. These official maps carry equal authority to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

The Elements

California Government Code Section 65302 establishes the seven (7) mandatory elements of the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise. It is recognized that some of the required elements may be addressed in combination with other complementary elements, such as Open Space and Conservation.

All of the mandated elements are found within the Rancho Mirage General Plan. This document integrates the mandatory and discretionary elements into five (5) major chapters, and one Administration Chapter organized to reflect compliance with State requirements that the General Plan be internally consistent, comprising an integrated and compatible statement of policies for the City. Each element of the General Plan has equal legal authority.

Community Development Chapter
The Community Development chapter most directly affects the character and quality of life of the community through the distribution of land uses, the intensity of commercial and other development, densities and types of housing, roadway and circulation plans, the provision of parks and recreational facilities, the establishment of architectural and community design guidelines, the preservation of scenic vistas, and the preservation and enhancement of a healthy economy. This chapter includes the following General Plan elements:

Community Development

* Land Use
* Circulation
* Housing
* Parks, Recreation and Trails
* Community Design
* Economic Development

Environmental Resources Chapter
This chapter describes the resources of the physical natural environment, including manmade artifacts of historical or archaeological significance, biological resources, open space and conservation and other natural resources. Goals and policies are set forth within each element to assure the preservation and enhancement of the physical environment and resources as important assets of the community. The Environmental Resources chapter includes the following elements:

Environmental Resources

* Archaeological and Historic Resources
* Biological Resources
* Water Resources
* Air Quality
* Energy and Mineral Resources
* Open Space and Conservation

Environmental Hazards Chapter
This chapter describes the hazards of the physical environment, including manmade hazardous conditions and toxic materials. Within each Element, goals and policies are set forth which identify specific hazards and means of assuring the protection of public health, safety and welfare. Hazards of particular concern to the City are given special attention in this chapter. The Environmental Hazards chapter of the General Plan includes the following elements:

Environmental Hazards

* Geotechnical, Seismic Safety, Soils and Erosion
* Flooding and Hydrology
* Noise
* Hazardous and Toxic Materials

Public Services and Facilities Chapter
The long-term provision of adequate levels of essential public facilities and services is a principle concern of local government. Goals and policies are set forth in each element to assure an adequate level of services and facilities congruent with the level of development anticipated in the City. The Public Services and Facilities chapter of the General Plan includes the following elements:

Public Services and Facilities

* Public Utilities
* Fire and Police Protection
* Schools and Libraries
* Health Services
* Emergency Preparedness
* Public Buildings and Facilities
* Arts and Culture

Using The General Plan

The General Plan, frequently described as the "constitution" of the City, is the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based. The Plan is a comprehensive information and planning guide established by State law to provide a framework for making informed decisions about the future of the community. The Plan identifies the community's land use, circulation, environmental, economic and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development. The General Plan, and supporting environmental documentation, identify concerns and issues important to the community, analyze them, and establish goals, policies, and program implementation measures, which resolve these issues. It also provides the basis for a rational nexus to support development, mitigation measures and exactions. Special studies and performance programs are also integral parts of the goals, policies, programs and measures which assure effective implementation of the General Plan.

Consistency with the General Plan

Proposals for development, either developer or City initiated, must be analyzed and tested for consistency with the goals, policies, and programs in every applicable element of the General Plan. On an ongoing basis, the City must assure and maintain consistency of the General Plan with adopted Specific Plans and the City Zoning Ordinance. This test of General Plan compliance is also a required criteria for determining significant impacts under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Interpretation of the General Plan

In any case where uncertainty exists regarding the location of boundaries of any land use category, proposed public facility symbol, circulation alignment, or other symbol or line found on the official maps, the following procedures will be used to resolve such uncertainty.

Boundaries shown in the General Plan and on official maps as approximately following the limits of any municipal corporation are to be construed as following these limits. Boundaries shown as following or approximately following section lines, half or quarter section lines shall be construed as following such lines.

Boundaries shown as following or approximately following the centerline of streams, creeks, rivers, or other continuously or intermittently flowing streams or creeks are to be construed as following the channel centerline of these water courses taken at mean low water, and, in the event of natural change in the location of such streams or other water courses, the zone boundary is to be construed as moving with the channel centerline.

Where a land use category applied to a parcel is not mapped to include an adjacent street or alley, the category shall be considered to extend to the centerline of the right of way. Boundaries shown as separated from, parallel, or approximately parallel to any of the features listed above shall be construed to be parallel to such features and at such distances therefrom as are shown on the map. Symbols that indicate appropriate locations for proposed public facilities are not property specific. They indicate only the general area within which a specific facility should be established.

CEQA Review of Consistency

State CEQA Guidelines require that an initial study include "an examination of whether the project is compatible with existing zoning and plans." The State CEQA Guidelines further stipulate that, "A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located." If a determination is made by the Planning Commission or the City Council that the proposed action is inconsistent with the General Plan, no further action shall be taken without the completion and processing of an EIR or other detailed analysis which would support a finding of overriding consideration.

Zoning Consistency

California State law also mandates that the City's Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. In the event that the Zoning Ordinance becomes inconsistent with the General Plan by reason of a General Plan Amendment, the Zoning Ordinance must be amended within a reasonable time so that it is made consistent with the General Plan, as amended. The Zoning Ordinance cannot be amended if it causes an inconsistency with the General Plan.

Amending The General Plan

The General Plan is not a static, but rather a dynamic and multi faceted document, which defines and addresses the changing needs of the community. It is also based on an ongoing assessment and understanding of existing and projected community needs. To assure that the General Plan is kept current, short-term programs and policies may be reviewed annually to reflect compatibility with budgetary priorities and related program status. Long-term programs and implementation measures must also be given forward planning consideration to assure timely funding and development of critical infrastructure and public services and facilities.

Annual Review

California Government Code requires that the planning agency "render an annual report to the legislative body (City Council) on the status of the Plan and the progress in its implementation" (Section 65400(b)). State law further requires that the Housing Element be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years.

Mandatory elements of the General Plan may be amended up to four (4) times in each calendar year. The City Council or any citizen may initiate a General Plan Amendment. It is left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction to establish an amendment schedule to be published one year in advance.

Application Procedures

Applications for the amendment of the General Plan and the appropriate fees are filed with the City Community Development Department. An amendment to the General Plan constitutes a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and therefore is evaluated for its environmental effects and consistency with other elements of the General Plan. Final approval of General Plan amendments is the responsibility of the City Council.

Exemptions

The State Legislature has recognized that occasions arise which require the local jurisdiction to have some flexibility in amending the General Plan. As set forth in the California Government Code, the following are exempt from the General Plan amendment schedule.

(1) Amendments requested and determined necessary for the development of a residential project, of which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of its units will be available to persons of low or moderate income (Sections 65361(b) and 65358(d)).

(2) Any amendment necessary to comply with a court decision in a case involving the legal adequacy of the General Plan (Sections 65361 and 65358 (d) (1)).

Specific Plans

A Specific Plan plays an important role as a refined version of the General Plan, applicable to a specific portion of the community. Specific Plans often provide detailed design and analysis of complex mixed-use projects, and indicate precise land use locations and designs. Specific Plans contain text, exhibits, and diagrams indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses and the necessary public and private urban support systems, including streets, utilities and drainage facilities.

Specific Plans also define the standards and criteria by which development and, where applicable, conservation will proceed on the property. Additionally, a Specific Plan provides a program of implementation measures and financing necessary to carry out the project. It must also be consistent with all facets of the General Plan and in turn, zoning, subdivision, and public works projects must be consistent with an existing Specific Plan (Government Code Section 65455).

Specific Plans are required for lands designated with the Specific Plan overlay on the Land Use Map. Larger complex development proposals may also be required to process a Specific Plan. Specific Plans are prepared, adopted and amended in the same manner as a General Plan, may be adopted by resolution or ordinance, and may be amended as often as deemed necessary by the City Council. Development proposals within areas designated with a specific plan overlay on the General Plan Land Use Map cannot proceed until a Specific Plan has been prepared and adopted by the City Council.

In areas where the Specific Plan encompasses more than one property, the plan must be completed and adopted prior to development on any affected property. Specific Plans may be prepared either by the applicant or the City. Should the City prepare the Specific Plan, it is entitled to reimbursement by affected property owners pursuant to Section 65456 of the California Government Code.

Capital Facilities

Among the statutory responsibilities of California, incorporated towns, cities and counties is to "annually review the capital improvement program of the city or county and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan." Also, pursuant to Government code Section 65401, all departments within the City and all other local government agencies must submit a list of proposed projects to the City. The City is responsible for reviewing these projects for conformity with the General Plan.

Implementation of the General Plan

California Government Code Section 65103(c) requires that local jurisdictions implement the General Plan once it has been adopted. The Rancho Mirage General Plan relies on element programs and implementation strategies, as well as the related mitigation measures and programs set forth in the General Plan Program EIR, to serve as implementation measures. The City Zoning Ordinance also plays a critical role in implementing the goals and policies of the Plan, and Specific Plans provide detailed implementation programs for specific portions of the General Plan area.

Implementation Through the Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is an exercise of police powers granted to the City by the State, and is the primary tool for implementing the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance regulates land use by distinct development zones and permitted uses. Text, maps, diagrams and other materials describe the distribution and intensity of land uses into such categories as residential, commercial and industrial uses. Written regulations establish minimum development standards for each of the land use zones in a manner consistent with the General Plan. Permitting processes set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, including Conditional Use Permits, Variances, Architectural Reviews and other land use permitting also implement the General Plan. The implementation of the General Plan is further regulated by Government Code Sections 65800 et. seq.

Implementation Through the Subdivision Ordinance

Like Zoning Ordinances, subdivision regulation is also an exercise of police powers and a principle instrument for implementing the General Plan. Establishing statewide uniformity in local subdivision procedures, the State Subdivision Map Act (Government Code Sections 66410 et seq.) leaves the standards for regulating the design and improvement of subdivision to local government.

The broadest authority for regulating subdivisions lies in Government Code Sections 66473.5, 66474, 66474.60, and 66474.61, requiring findings that, among other things, the subdivision is consistent with the City General Plan and any applicable Specific Plan.

Development Agreements

State law provides for the adoption of development agreements between a project proponent and the City, in accordance with Government Code Section 65865 et seq. The purpose of development agreements is to provide developers with additional assurances that development approvals will not be nullified by some future local policy or regulation change. In exchange, the developer may be required to meet certain conditions or performance criteria which become part of the agreement.

Development agreements can be a useful means of meeting General Plan goals and policies, while removing some of the risks faced by developers. Agreements can remain in effect for a few or several years, the term typically being set forth in the agreement.

It is important to emphasize that, as set forth in Government Code Section 65866, the City, unless otherwise provided by the development agreement, is not prevented from applying new rules, regulations, and policies which do not conflict with those rules, regulations, and policies applicable to that property. Neither is the City prevented from denying or conditionally approving any subsequent development project application on the basis of such existing or new rules, regulations or policies.

Commissions and Committees

The City is also empowered to establish advisory commissions or committees, which may be comprised of public officials as well as private individuals, to review and make recommendations on policies or programs facilitating implementation of the General Plan. These commissions typically address such issue areas as parks and recreation, trails, libraries, public safety, community and architectural design, affordable housing and emergency preparedness. The City Council may establish commissions or committees to address specific and focused issues, or to provide recommendations on an ongoing basis. The Council may perpetuate or dissolve these commissions or committees as it sees fit.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Administration Element is essential to the effective enactment of the General Plan. The Plan relies on the development and maintenance of City regulatory documents, including the Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plan requirements, the Subdivision Ordinance, and City Rules for the Implementation of CEQA. The General Plan itself is a living document with mandates for frequent review and refinement. Amendments to the Plan should be given careful consideration and not be granted casually. The goal, policies, programs and implementation strategies of the Element will help to assure the effective administration and implementation of all elements of the Rancho Mirage General Plan.

ADMINISTRATION GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Comprehensive and integrated administration and implementation of all elements of the Rancho Mirage General Plan through consistent and effective policies and programs.

Policy 1
Provide for the periodic revision and updating of the General Plan and ensure that associated City ordinances, including the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, are maintained in conformance with the General Plan.

Program 1.A
The City Council shall, through the public hearing process, receive an annual report from the Planning Commission on the status of the General Plan and shall make recommendations which address identified inadequacies or opportunities for updating the Plan.

Program 1.B
The City shall comprehensively review and amend, as necessary, the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to maintain consistency with the General Plan.

Policy 2
Provide for the use of Specific Plans as a preferred method of detailed and systematic implementation of the General Plan.

Program 2.A
Maintain application materials and guidelines for the preparation of specific plans and encourage their use for large and/or complex residential, commercial or industrial projects of twenty acres or larger and on lands contemplated for annexation into the City.

Policy 3
Periodically examine and review on an ongoing basis the long-term implications of General Plan policies and programs as they relate to the City's ability to provide public services and facilities.

Program 3.A
The annual review of the General Plan, as set forth in Program 1.A, above, shall include a report on

interrelationships, impacts or enhancements of the General Plan with regard to the City's ability to fund public services or secure public facilities.

Policy 4
Establish and maintain a cooperative planning process with Riverside County and the Agua Caliente Tribal Council, assuring an effective advisory role regarding any and all development and land use planning issues proposed within or in close proximity to the City's Sphere-of-Influence.

Program 4.A
Enter into an agreement with Riverside County and the Agua Caliente Tribal Council to review all proposed land use and other development proposals, recognize the City's advisory role, and request that the County and Tribal Council forward copies of all development plans proposed within the advisory area to the City for review and comment.

Policy 5
Assure that properly filed development applications shall be processed in an expeditious and timely manner.

Program 5.A
Maintain application processing procedures that assure expeditious and timely processing of land development applications, including "fast tracking" procedures for priority development proposals.

Policy 6
The City shall utilize master facility and similar plans to address the City's recreation, drainage/flood control, infrastructure, utility management, traffic control, and other facility needs.

Program 6.A
The City shall develop master facility plans to establish availability of, need and availability of funding for additional public services and facilities. Master plans should also include schedules for phased implementation, which shall be incorporated into the City's capital improvement programs.

Policy 7
In-fill development shall be encouraged within the corporate boundaries of the City, and expansion of new development shall be logically phased and, as appropriate, guided by the development of existing and new Specific Plans.

Policy 8
City shall provide opportunities for review and comment on development proposals through public hearing notices sent to owners of property located at least within 500 feet of the development proposal site.

Policy 9
City projects shall comply with the same policies, procedures and regulations required of the private sector.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER III

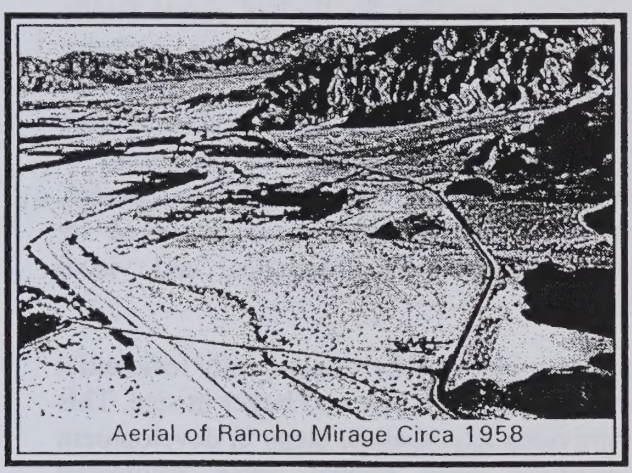
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development chapter includes the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Parks and Recreation, Community Design, and Economic and Fiscal Development. This chapter significantly influences the character and quality of life in the community, the distribution of land uses, the intensity and types of housing, the provision of parks and recreational facilities, the establishment of architectural and community design guidelines, the preservation of scenic vistas, and the preservation and enhancement of a healthy economy.

LAND USE ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to provide a comprehensive plan of the general allocation and distribution of land uses throughout the City. The element also serves as a statement of the standards and targets for residential population density and building intensity. The Land Use Element identifies reas planned for commercial and industrial uses, and areas of existing and planned public and quasi-public uses. It is the broadest of the elements and is the basis for coherent land use policy development.


Aerial of Rancho Mirage Circa 1958

BACKGROUND

All of the principles of community and land use planning are applied to the drafting and adoption of a comprehensive, long-term General Plan of land uses for the physical development of the City. The process of developing the land use plan involves the analysis of existing land use patterns, current and future available public services and facilities, and consideration of the physical environmental constraints and opportunities on development..

Government Code Section 65300 requires every city and county to prepare and adopt "a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development" of the community. The City General Plan is further required to provide a land use element that designates lands for housing, business, industry, open space, as well as other uses deemed appropriate by the City (Government Code Sections 65302(a) and 65303). Although all the General Plan Elements are important, the Land Use Element is generally considered to be the most representative of and essential to the General Plan. In practice, the Land Use Element is of the broadest scope and the most widely used in the General Plan, with goals, policies and programs set forth to guide and direct the physical development of the community.

The Land Use Element is the essential General Plan component with direct and indirect relationships to all other elements. One of the most closely related of these is the Circulation Element, which is directly affected by and has a constraining effect upon the viability of the Land Use Element. The General Plan Guidelines and case law require a close and logical correspondence between these two elements. Other elements with strong dependence upon the element and its land use allocation model include Housing, Community Design, Economic and Fiscal, as well as those elements reflecting recognition of environmental hazards and resources of the community. Policies and programs associated with each of the major land use categories are set forth in the Land Use Element and reflect the compatible and integrally planned distribution of land uses reflected in the Plan.

Types of Land Uses

The Land Use Element and accompanying land use map describe and designate the distribution of land uses by type, location, intensity and/or extent of use. Uses to be considered are diverse and include: residential, commercial, industrial, open space, recreation, public buildings and facilities, and other categories of public and private land uses.

Prior to the adoption of the Rancho Mirage General Plan comprehensive update, the City utilized the land use designations and assignments adopted in the 1987 Plan. A comprehensive assessment of existing land uses and their distribution was conducted using field surveys, aerial photo analysis and a comprehensive computer-based geographic information system (GIS). Based upon this analysis, a revised land use model was developed by the City General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). Table III-1 provides in summary a description of the

City's General Plan land use designations and Table III-2 provides the statistical summary of these land uses.

Following the tables, overall land use goals, policies and programs are presented. In addition, a discussion of each major land use category is also presented followed by related goals, policies and programs.

Role of the Plan

The development of a community Land Use Element requires the broadest consideration of the issues addressed in all the other General Plan Elements. It clarifies and addresses most of the concerns of the community's development and plays an essential role in synthesizing all land use issues.

Table III-1
City of Rancho Mirage General Plan
Proposed Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
Residential (R-HR) Hillside Reserve (0-1 du/640 ac)	This designation provides for limited single-family residential development on privately owned property within hillside areas. It serves as an intermediate land use designation between Open Space lands and more intense residential uses. It precludes premature or inappropriate expansion of urban development. Development in this designation is restricted by topography/slopes drainage, biological and visual resources.
(R-E) Residential Estates (0-1 du/ ac)	This designation provides for single-family residential development on lots one acre and larger in size. This land use provides intermediate steps in development density between more typical urban residential densities and lower densities and open space lands providing lots sufficient for rural and estate lifestyle.
(R-L) Low Density Residential (0-2 du/ac)	This low density designation provides for single-family residential development typically on individual lots of about one-half acre. These lands serve to buffer more dense residential development from estate residential uses and may be appropriate in areas with some site constraints.
(R-L-3) Low Density Residential (0-3 du/acre)	This designation provides for moderately low density subdivisions and Planned Residential Developments (PRDs). It serves to transition between lower and more moderate (medium) residential densities. Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) consolidate areas for structures with common open space and recreation areas and integrate access and private internal roadways. PRDs permit the transfer of densities from open space/recreation areas thus preserving open space.

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
	The purpose of the PRD designation is to promote planned residential development and amenities beyond those expected under conventional development. This designation helps to achieve greater flexibility in designing varying ranges in densities and encourages well conceived neighborhoods through creative and imaginative planning. The goal of this designation is to provide for an appropriate mix of housing types, which are unique in their physical characteristics and warrant special methods of residential development. A full range of residential development is permitted.
(R-M) Medium Density Residential (0-5 du/ ac)	Appropriate residential development under this designation includes single family and PRDs with shared open space, recreation and other amenities. Garden apartments and affordable housing may also be appropriate for these lands. The intent of this designation is to encourage development of a wide variety of dwelling unit types.
(R-H) High Density Residential (0-9 du/ac)	This designation allows for the greatest diversity of residential development including attached single and multi-family dwellings. This designation is most suitable for planned communities and affordable and senior housing where smaller units and higher densities may be appropriate. Duplex and multiplex development is the most common and provides for PRD's comprised of a varying range of residential types including apartments and condominiums. Mobile home parks or subdivisions with PRD type development may also allowed with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.
(S-OL) Senior Overlay	This designation is applied as an overlay to an underlying residential designation. It recognizes special circumstances or conditions that favorably support and are appropriate for senior housing including close proximity to commercial medical and other seniors-oriented uses. Seniors development on these lands may qualify for density bonuses assistance from the City Housing Authority and special design standards.
(MHP) Mobile Home Park (0-9 du/ac)	This designation is applied to all viable mobile home parks in the community. Other appropriate land uses include manufactured housing. This designation encourages Planned Residential Developments (PRD) as the preferred land use pattern.

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
Commercial	
(C-N) Neighborhood Commercial	This designation provides for neighborhood-scale shopping centers conveniently located near residential areas. These developments are typically anchored by supermarkets and super drugstores. A wide range of other uses including banking, barbers/beauty salons, dry cleaners, restaurants, service businesses and other related activities are typically found in these planned centers. Typical sizes are 8 to 10 acres providing approximately 80,000 to 100,000 square feet of gross leasable floor area.
(C-G) General Commercial	These lands include a wide variety of smaller commercial centers,specialty retail shops, a broad range of clothing and apparel jewelry stores, and a variety of personal service businesses. Smaller moderately priced department stores may also be appropriate under this designation. Development may range from free-standing retail buildings and restaurants to planned commercial centers. Typical sizes range between 2 to 8 acres with gross leasable square footage varying with uses. Hotels and motels may also be appropriate on these lands.
(C-C) Community Commercial	This designation provides for larger, community- scale shopping centers and malls. These centers may be anchored by several department stores or other large-scale anchors as well as a variety of retail outlets and restaurant and entertainment uses. Hotels and motels may also be appropriate on these lands. Typical sizes range between 100-300,000 square feet or more of gross leasable floor area. This type of development requires approval of a Specific Plan. While smaller than regional facilities, the community commercial center will serve the entire community as well as the surrounding market area.
(O) Office	This designation is limited to a variety of professional office development including administrative, corporate, institutional, law, medical, financial, insurance, real estate, and government offices. It may also be combined with Neighborhood-General-and-Community-scale commercial uses. These less intense uses may also be compatible with medium and higher density residential developments.

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
(M-U) Mixed Use Commercial	This designation is essentially limited to Specific Plan project areas. It recognizes the potential for thoughtfully planned integration of commercial office and residential uses. Development on these lands typically requires development of compatible design standards, shared internal circulation, and complementary and synergistic relationships.
(Rs-H) Resort Hotel	This designation allows for the development of hotels and destination resorts with limited ancillary commercial uses, such as restaurants lounges and small retail shops that directly support the primary use.
(---/SP) Specific Plan Overlay	This designation is used in conjunction with other underlying designations. It requires the development of a Specific Plan of Land Use. The designation is applied as an overlay on the General Plan Land Use Map and can be added to any land use designation. It is also appropriate as a means of processing community-scale commercial development proposals. Specific Plans provide detailed design and analysis of large scale and/or complex projects indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses. They also examine the required level of public facilities and services and their availability, and should help establish economic viability of proposed developments.
Industrial(I-L) Light Industrial	This designation provides for business parks and the development of any and all industrial uses operating entirely in enclosed buildings, and those requiring limited and screenable outdoor storage. Examples include clean manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution facilities, mini-warehouse storage, and a variety of light manufacturing businesses. Siting industrial lands in close proximity to major regional highway and railroad facilities is also desirable. Preferred development includes master planned business and industrial parks with integrated access and internal circulation.

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
	This designation may also allow conditional development of more intense industrial uses with the potential to generate substantial levels of noise smoke, dust, glare, traffic vibration or other nuisance. Examples include the manufacturing of durable goods such as appliances, furniture, fabricated metal products, light electrical, and transportation equipment. These uses may also have greater dependence on outdoor storage. Proponents will be required to mitigate any adverse impacts to acceptable or insignificant levels, demonstrate conformance with all community environmental standards, and be compatible with existing and planned land uses.
Institutional Services and Facilities	
(P) Public/Quasi-Public	As noted herein and on the Land Use Map this designation provides for and/or recognized such facilities as City Hall other City and other governmental offices, libraries, schools, hospitals, floodways, police and fire stations, utility substations as well as other public/quasi-public administrative offices.
Institutional Symbols	
(P/CH)	City Hall
(P/FS) Fire Station	Fire Station
(P/PS) Police Station	Police Station
(P/H) Hospital	Hospitals and similar in/out patient medical services. Also may be assigned to convalescent and skilled nursing facilities.
(P/S) Schools	Provides for educational facilities such as day care, elementary, intermediate, high schools, special schools and technical schools.
(P/L) Libraries	Libraries
(P/PO) Post Offices	Post Offices
(P/U-SS)Utilities	Utility Substation-designates electric, telephone, gas, water and other similar facilities.

Land Use Designation (Density)	Purpose of Land Use
(OS) Open Space	This designation is assigned to those lands which constitute a special important or valuable natural resource which warrants protection. The designation is assigned to such lands as parks which carry a designation of (OS-PP); golf courses/pool areas/landscaped lands are defined as private open space with a designation of OS/PV. Mountainous areas under public or quasi-public ownership are assigned the designation of Mountain Reserve (OS/MR). The designation allows the discretionary approval of trails, trailheads, and associated facilities, but does not allow vehicular access.
Open Space Symbols	The Open Space designation may also be used to define special resource areas or those that may pose threats or hazards to development. Lands important for their recreational, biological, or regional economic value may also be assigned an open space designation. Examples of resource lands and hazards include liquefaction hazard areas, detention and retention basins, trails, estuaries, and large habitat areas for biological resources.
(OS/PP) Public Parks	Public Parks
(OS/MR) Mountain Reserve	Mountain Reserve: This designation is assigned to public lands located within the Santa Rosa Mountains. Uses are limited to recreational activities: hiking, equestrian and non-motorized bike trails consistent with the need to protect sensitive biological resources.
(OS/PV)Private Open Space	Private Open Space: This designation is assigned to golf courses, lakes and water features, tennis courts and other recreational facilities occurring within Planned Residential Developments.
(OS/FW) Floodways	Floodways Such as natural or man-made floodways and drainage channels.

Table III-2
City of Rancho Mirage
Statistical Summary of Land Uses

	Land Use Category	Total Acres	Acres (Dev.d/Vac) Not Available at this Time	% of Total Acres (Approximate)
R-H	Hillside Reserve (1 du/640 ac)	267		2%
R-E	Residential Estates (1 du/ac)	534		3%
R-L	Low Density Residential (2 du/ac)	2,006		13%
R-L-3	Low Density Residential (3 du/ac)	1,546		8%
R-M	Medium Density Residential (5 du/ac)	719		6%
R-H	High Density Residential (9 du/ac)	269		2%
MHP	Mobile Home Park (9 du/ac)	82		1%
	Residential Subtotal	5,423		35%
O	Office	130		1%
C-N	Neighborhood Commercial	95		1%
C-G	General Commercial	209		1%
C-C	Community Commercial	130		1%
Rs-H	Resort Commercial	157		1%
MU	Mixed Used (Includes residential, densities vary)	64		<1%
I-L	Light Industrial	184		1%
	Commercial Subtotal	969		6%
H	Hospital	107		1%
P	Public Uses (Institutional)	82		1%
	Institutional Subtotal	189		2%
MR	Mountain Reserve	4,382		28%
OS	Open Space	2,582		16%
	Undesignated Open Space	862		5%
	Open Space Subtotal	7,826		49%
	Streets	1,294		8%
	TOTAL	15,701		100%
	Sphere of Influence S. of I-10	1,451		9%
	N. of I-10	4,053		26%
	TOTAL	5,504		35%

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As the City of Rancho Mirage continues to grow, its mix of land uses and its needs can be expected to change. While the Land Use Element helps to provide a degree of predictability in how the community will develop, there will be a periodic need to reevaluate the land use plan for the City and make adjustments. State law provides for regular amendments to the General Plan and its elements, including the Land Use Map. As future needs change, the community will have the opportunity to adjust and fine-tune the Land Use Element and map to address changing circumstances, take advantages of emerging opportunities and remedy potential land use conflicts.

Consistent with past planning efforts of the City, the Land Use Element continues to support the logically staged extension of public infrastructure systems and the urban land uses they support. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to encourage in-fill development in those areas which have undergone substantial development prior to encouraging development in outlying areas. In-filling along the Highway 111 corridor continues to be a priority. Development planning in the City's Sphere-of-Influence should be encouraged through the preparation and implementation of Specific Plans.

Putting the Land Use Element into effect is accomplished by enforcing the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and other ordinances, codes and regulations. The City's regulatory environment requires that development proposals meet certain criteria in the General Plan and undergo development plan review, which may be subject to public hearings. The following are general policies and programs for land use, followed by discussion of and more detailed policies and programs for each major land use designation.

GENERAL LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A balanced mix of functionally integrated land uses, meeting general social and economic needs of the community through simplified, compatible and consistent land use and zoning designations.

GOAL 2

A resort residential community of desirable neighborhoods, a complementary employment base and a variety of community facilities.

Policy 1
The City shall establish and maintain a master land use map designating the appropriate land uses which implement the goals and policies of the Land Use Element and other elements of the General Plan.

Policy 2
The City Zoning Ordinance shall directly correspond to the General Plan land use designations and shall include appropriate zoning regulations that implement the Land Use Element.

Program 2.A
The City shall adopt and maintain a Zoning Ordinance and designations that directly correspond to designations set forth in the Land Use Element, and which guide and regulate development consistent with the General Plan.

Policy 3
The City shall integrate land use analysis and planning as an essential part of development of a master strategic plan for economic development.

Policy 4
Enhance the character and viability of the City's commercial areas, primarily in the Highway 111 corridor, by integrating higher density residential uses with retail and office commercial development.

Program 4.A
The City shall incorporate land use and development standards into the Zoning Ordinance that permit and encourage the appropriate integration of residential uses into mix-use commercial land use areas and zoning districts.

Policy 5
The City shall assign Specific Plan overlay designations to land located in the City's Sphere-of-Influence to guide and assure an effective and integrated mix of commercial, office, industrial and residential uses.

Policy 6
All land use development proposals shall be consistent with all applicable land use policies and standards contained in the General Plan.

Policy 7
In-fill development shall be encouraged by prioritizing capital improvements in the developed areas of the City.

Program 7.A
The City's capital improvement program shall assign high priority to projects serving the City's developed and developing areas.

Program 7.B
The City shall make available maps and other information showing the location of all available infrastructure.

Program 7.C
The City shall utilize Specific Plans to assure the phased, logical and cost-effective extension of infrastructure and buildout in new development.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

BACKGROUND

The City of Rancho Mirage has evolved as a primarily resort residential community. In recent years the community has experienced slow growth due to regional economic conditions. In 1996, the City of Rancho Mirage had approximately 9,617 dwelling units, of which approximately 8,202 were detached and attached single family units, and about 534 were multi-family units. The City also had 881 mobilehomes.

The prevalence of single family residential development has helped establish the low density character of the City. This pattern has provided residents with open space and recreation opportunities on their own individual lots. Planned residential developments (PRDs), the prevailing residential development type in the City, also preserve these low densities by transferring development rights to specific areas and dedicating large areas of a development to community open space and recreation uses. Both types of development have been important to assuring the high quality residential environment of the City.

Seasonal Community

Of the City's 9,617 dwelling units built by 1996, approximately 5,242 were occupied by permanent residents, while about 4,375 or 45% serve as second or vacation homes for part-time residents. Therefore, the City's seasonal population increases during the fall/winter/spring months and decreases during the summer period. The majority of seasonal/second home residences are located in the City's planned residential communities.

Projected City Population

The General Plan provides for a range of residential densities ranging up to nine (9) dwelling units per acre within six residential land use designations. This does not include the "Mixed-Use" designation, which also allows integrated residential development. Within the City boundaries, the majority of the area is developed as single family residential dwelling units within private planned residential development and standard subdivisions. The 1990 permanent population in Rancho Mirage was 9,778 and had increased to about 10,558 by January, 1996.

The City's 1990 average household size was 1.9 in 1990 and had risen to about 2.05 by 1996. As the City's demographics continue to change, the average household size is expected to increase. For a more detailed discussion of the City's household and demographic composition, please see the General Plan Program EIR and the City Community Profile. Based upon the General Plan Land Use Map, the City has a potential to generate a maximum of 18,871 dwelling units. Based upon an average household size of 2.05 persons, the City's maximum peak seasonal population would be approximately 38,685.

Affordable Housing

The City, and all other jurisdictions in the State of California, are required by law to assure the provision and availability of decent housing and a suitable living environment for all economic segments of the community, with special attention to very low, low, and moderate income groups. The elderly are also an identified special group which require special attention when providing for the community's housing needs, as do those paying too much for rent/mortgages and those

living in overcrowded conditions. For additional information addressing these and other related issues of the community associated with housing stock, please refer to the Housing Element of the City's General Plan.

RESIDENTIAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

Preservation and enhancement of the predominantly low density, high quality residential character of the City.

GOAL 2

A variety of all housing types and densities that will accommodate existing and future residents of the community.

Policy 1
Areas of existing residential development and surrounding vacant lands shall be planned in a manner which preserves neighborhood character and assures a consistent and compatible residential land use pattern.

Program 1.A
The City shall assign and periodically review residential land use designations to assure that related General Plan goals, including preservation of low density neighborhoods, are met.

Program 1.B
Consistently apply the City's discretionary powers and development review process to assure that subdivision and development plans are compatible with existing residential areas.

Policy 2
Encourage in-fill development on subdivided lands located adjacent to existing residential areas and utilities to maximize the efficient utilization of land and infrastructure.

Policy 3
The City shall discourage the discontinuous or leap-frog development of residential subdivisions by requiring necessary improvement/extension of intervening roadways and infrastructure to serve new development.

Policy 4
Future development within existing or approved planned unit developments shall not exceed the overall density initially approved for the development.

Policy 5
Density transfers may occur in planned residential developments in conjunction with the provision of common area amenities and open space. Golf courses, greenbelts, pool areas and other open space uses incorporated into these developments shall be designated as Open Space areas to assure their preservation as such.

Policy 6
Development in areas designated Hillside Reserve shall be limited to a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit per 640 acres, with development restricted to a specific area on each lot and the balance of the parcel dedicated as open space.

Policy 7
In addition to other policies set forth for open space, Mountain Reserve and hillside designations, additional development parameters to be addressed include slope disturbance, development area and lot coverage, renaturalization and revegetation, and access roads.

Policy 8
Residential development standards shall incorporate set backs, height, pad elevations and other design and performance standards which assure privacy while preserving scenic viewsheds from adjoining properties.

Policy 9
Low income/affordable housing shall not be located within one area of the community, but shall be dispersed where feasible, appropriate, and compatible with surrounding land uses.

Program 9.A
The City shall monitor the amount of low income housing available and make best efforts to meet state requirements for providing such housing types.

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

BACKGROUND

Rancho Mirage has seen the evolution of its commercial land uses initially from small-scale retail and service

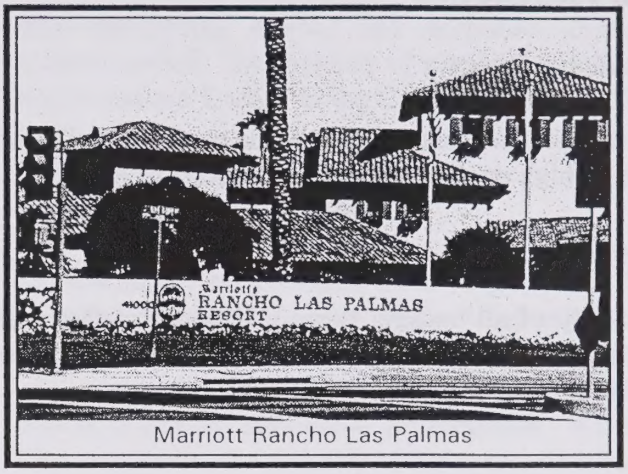
providers located along Highway 111 to community-scale centers serving a broad market area and typified by Home Depot and the Monterey MarketPlace. As the community has continued to grow, neighborhood shopping centers have developed to serve the City's residents, both permanent and seasonal. While the City has not attempted to become a commercial powerhouse, certain opportunities such as resort development have placed the City in a position of strength.

While historically commercial development has occurred primarily along the Highway 111 corridor, the City's recent success with the launching of the Monterey Market Place has allowed it to tap the market access provided by U.S. Interstate-10. With commercial development thriving at the Monterey Avenue/I-10 interchange, and with the expansion of the Mid-Valley Parkway, this part of the City will be an important contributor to the broadened economic base.

The planned provision of neighborhood shopping will address the needs of the City's residents as new homes are built and the resident population continues to grow. Future neighborhood centers should be sited to provide convenient access to supermarkets, drugstores and ancillary commercial services. The General Plan provides thoughtfully sited existing and future neighborhood centers located on arterial roadways, which are expected to satisfactorily meet the neighborhood shopping needs of the community.

Office development has also emerged as an area of relative strength for the City, which has gained a reputation as a preferred business address attracting medical, legal and other professionals. The City office market also benefits from the location of Eisenhower Medical Center, which supports a wide range of medical professionals with offices elsewhere in the community. It also may serve as a nucleus for expanding this office market niche into such areas as medical research and development, and may even contribute to related manufacturing in coming years, as discussed below.

Another of the City's important commercial strengths is the destination resort hotel market. In 1996, the City hosts three major resort hotel projects: the Westin Mission Hills, the Marriott Rancho Las Palmas and the Ritz-Carlton. Another resort hotel has been planned for the Mission Hills North project, which will be integrated with championship golf already developed at this site. Transient occupancy tax (also termed bed tax) is generated by the City's hotels and is an important component of the City's general fund operating revenues.



Marriott Rancho Las Palmas

Most commercial development along the Highway 111 corridor is now regulated by the Highway 111 East and West Specific Plans. Adopted in the early 1990s, these plans set forth the types and intensities of land uses that are permitted and include design standards and guidelines to regulate development. Most of the corridor is also located within project areas of the City Redevelopment Agency and benefit from various programs that assist in the development and redevelopment of these areas.

The relative importance of the City's various commercial lands is more fully discussed in the Economic and Fiscal Element, the City's Community Profile and the General Plan Program EIR.

The General Plan recognizes existing commercial land uses, as well as vacant lands appropriate for commercial development. The Plan provides six (6) commercial land use designations allowing the development of general, neighborhood, and community commercial, as well as professional office, and resort hotels. The Plan also establishes Specific Plan overlays, which are used to provide control and coordination of commercial development, providing detailed design and analysis of complex projects, indicating the location and intensity of proposed uses.

The thoughtful location, distribution and assigned intensity of commercial development is expected to provide residents with a wider range of choices and services, while greatly enhancing the City's economic base. Commercial designations also recognize the City's comparative advantages in the highly competitive Coachella Valley market, and are consistent with the City's efforts to preserve the predominant low density, resort residential character.

COMMERCIAL GROWTH POTENTIAL

The General Plan provides substantial additional lands for future commercial development. These include lands within existing commercial developments and lands where development has yet to occur. Each of the commercial land use categories and their development potential in approximate gross leasable square feet (gla) are set forth in the table below.

Table III-3
Commercial Land Use Development Potential

	Commercial Designation	Total Acres	Estimated Square Footage (millions) [1]
O	Office	138	1.232 [2]
C-G	General Commercial	236	1.943
C-N	Neighborhood Commercial	105	0.933
C-C	Community Commercial	130	1.175
C-R	Resort Commercial	137	1,669 (rooms)
MU	Mixed Use Commercial	64	0.418
	TOTAL	810	5.7 Mil Sq. Ft.

[1] All square footages assume 20% lot coverage.

[2] Assumes pure office development, not including office uses in other commercial zones.

As shown on Table III-3, of the 810 acres of commercially designated lands in the City, approximately 552 or more than 68% are currently (1996) vacant. The General Commercial category comprises the largest block of undeveloped commercial lands (~148 acres), with Community Commercial comprising the next largest block of vacant land (~120 acres). Of all categories, Office comprises the largest percentage of undeveloped land (~83%). The General Plan, therefore, provides more than ample commercial lands for future development. Additional commercial lands are currently found in the City's Sphere-of-Influence and will be addressed through future Specific Plans.

COMMERCIAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

A responsive range of commercial land uses conveniently and appropriately distributed throughout the City, meeting the community's needs and taking full advantage of emerging development and economic opportunities.

Policy 1
Sufficient lands shall be designated to provide a full range of commercial services to the community and surrounding areas for present and future years.

Program 1.A
Maintain the Land Use map on an on-going basis to assure sufficient lands are designated for commercial uses to support the needs of the community and surrounding areas in a manner consistent with economic opportunities and the resort residential character of the community.

Program 1.B
Make available market information to developers and realtors, which identifies the City's service needs and potential sites suitable for those commercial goods and services.

Policy 2
Development standards for commercial land uses shall include setbacks, pad elevations, massing and height limitations, and other requirements, which provide adequate visibility and accessibility, while preserving the scenic viewsheds from adjoining properties and public rights-of-ways.

Policy 3
Encourage lot consolidation and integrated development planning along the Highway 111 corridor to reduce fragmentation and encourage in-fill development.

Program 3.A
The City shall implement the Highway 111 East and West Specific Plans to encourage a cohesive and coherent development pattern, which reduces fragmented development and promotes infilling.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

BACKGROUND

Prior to the annexation of lands adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad lines in 1994, the City of Rancho Mirage did not assign lands for industrial uses. With the annexation of lands in the northeast quadrant of the City, lands in Section 19 and east of Bob Hope Drive and immediately south of the Southern Pacific Railroad lines were designated for industrial uses. The most recent update of the General Plan increased this acreage from 155 acres to 184 acres.

Close and immediate access to Interstate-10 and Southern Pacific rail lines are considered important attributes of these lands, and also assure enhanced land use compatibility for both industrial and surrounding lands. These industrial lands are also located within the service boundaries of the Imperial Irrigation District, which is able to provide substantial savings in electric power and has the flexibility to structure favorable arrangements with substantial power users.

The Land Use Element provides for industrial land uses which can be best characterized as "light" and including industrial and business park development, and other uses conducted entirely in enclosed buildings and with limited and screenable outdoor storage. Industrial uses with the potential to generate excessive noise, dust or smoke, glare, traffic or other significant environmental impact are considered inappropriate for siting on these lands. These and other issues are taken under consideration when reviewing industrial development plans.

Development proposals for industrial uses must include site plans and building elevations, descriptions of machinery, processes, and products, and specifications for the mechanisms and techniques to be used to mitigate impacts from industrial operations. Such proposals must provide a complete characterization of activities, processes and waste/pollutant management technologies to be utilized during the user's operation.

The potential for industrial development in the City will rest primarily on the ability of the City to exploit local and regional industrial service needs, as well as on availability of land, public services and access to highways and other major transportation links. Continued growth in the Rancho Mirage area will generate its own continued demand for light industrial developments. A broad range of industrial development is provided for through appropriate designations and the development of significant sites (10 acres or larger), and should be processed as master planned or specific planned industrial parks. These should be established through development guidelines that assure provisions for roadway and infrastructure improvements.

INDUSTRIAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Lands that provide for the development of non-polluting, clean industrial development that broadens the economic/employment base of the City, and assures

compatible integration with other, non-industrial land uses.

Policy 1
Provide adequate and appropriate lands designated for industrial uses to provide a broad range of industrial development.

Policy 2
Industrial lands shall be located in areas that maximize all available and planned infrastructure, including but not limited to electric and natural gas service and major transportation corridors, and should minimize the impact on public health and safety.

Policy 3
To enhance the efficient use of industrial lands, the City shall encourage the preparation of a Specific Plan, which master plans the extension of roadways, drainage facilities, utilities and railroad-serving infrastructure.

Program 3.A
Prior to or concurrent with the issuance of development permits, the City shall require the develop of a Specific Plan on lands designated for industrial development, which shall address circulation, infrastructure, drainage and development standards and guidelines to assure efficient industrial development consistent with the character and quality of the community.

Policy 4
The City of Rancho Mirage shall seek to attract appropriate industrial users for which the area is particularly suited and encourage those industries to take advantage of the local labor force and markets with which the City has a comparative advantage.

Program 4.A
In cooperation with property owners, Chamber of Commerce, as well as other private interests, the City shall promote development of industrial lands through coordinated joint efforts.

Policy 5
The City shall encourage and support the relocation of inappropriately located industrial or quasi-industrial land uses, which are incompatible with existing and planned land uses.

Program 5.A
The City shall evaluate existing industrial and quasi-industrial land uses and encourage the formation of industrial parks appropriate for relocating existing inappropriately located industrial uses.

Policy 6
The City shall require adherence to applicable development standards and guidelines to assure aesthetically acceptable industrial developments for all new industrial sites.

Program 6.A
As an integral part of the industrial park Specific Plan, the City shall require thoughtful site planning and extensive use of landscaping to enhance the appearance of industrial areas.

Program 6.B
The City shall review all industrial development proposals with a special regard for public health and safety issues to ensure that the type and intensity of the use is appropriate for the proposed location and compatible with surrounding land uses.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

BACKGROUND

The provisions of adequate levels of public facilities and services is one of the principal concerns or functions of local government. Land uses for public facilities include such governmental functions as City Hall and fire stations, water wells and storage tanks. Others include schools, hospitals and other medical facilities, utility facilities, public parks, and libraries.

The extent and intensity of various land uses determines the level of public services and facilities needed to support them. Residential, commercial, institutional and industrial development each generate specific demand for public services and facilities. The planned, logical extension of urban areas cannot occur without careful planning for the extension of public services and facilities. This includes the maintenance of adequate staffing of City departments responsible for regulating land use and development, assuring adequate and appropriately designed and constructed streets and drainage facilities, and the provision of economic development assistance.

Several service providers are not under the direct regulatory jurisdiction of the City. For instance, the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), rather than the City, is responsible for domestic water and sewer facilities. CVWD is also responsible for assuring the provision of flood control facilities. Nonetheless, the City has the essential responsibility to cooperate and coordinate with the appropriate agencies to assure that public services and facilities complement and are compatible with other land uses.

PUBLIC FACILITIES POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Public facilities which are located to efficiently serve the community and are compatible with surround land uses.

Policy 1
The City of Rancho Mirage shall encourage the development of public facilities in a manner which assures adequate levels of service, while remaining compatible with existing and future land uses.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

BACKGROUND

The open spaces in the City of Rancho Mirage are important areas of environmental, aesthetic and recreational value. These open space areas constitute a critically important part of the community environment. Open space areas within the City include lands designated for the preservation of natural resources (plant and animal communities), desert washes, mineral deposits, parks and recreational facilities, and areas where the presence or existence of hazardous conditions have prohibited development.

As discussed with regard to residential land uses, planned residential developments (PRDs) are the predominant residential land use in the City. Many benefit from the transfer of development rights or permitted densities onto smaller areas, with the remainder dedicated to open space and recreation facilities, including pools, tennis courts, golf courses and passive landscaped open space areas. These areas are required to remain as open space for the life of the development and are not available for further residential or other non-open space uses.

There are four types of open space categories described in the Open Space element, which include open space for public parks (OS-PP), private golf courses and common open space areas (OS-PV), publicly owned mountainous reserves (OS-MR) and floodways/washes/channels (OS-FW). Each of these is discussed in more detail under the General Plan Element of Open Space and Conservation. Below are Policies and Programs for Open Space and Conservation which will assist the City in implementing the Land Use element as well as the Open Space element.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

Open space areas which protect environmental resources, guard against environmental hazards, provide recreational opportunities and enhanced aesthetic character of the City.

GOAL 2

A land use pattern which preserves the City's resort residential atmosphere, including scenic resources such as hillside and mountain vistas, waterways, and native desert communities.

Policy 1
Lands suitable and appropriate for preservation as open space areas shall be maintained and enhanced.

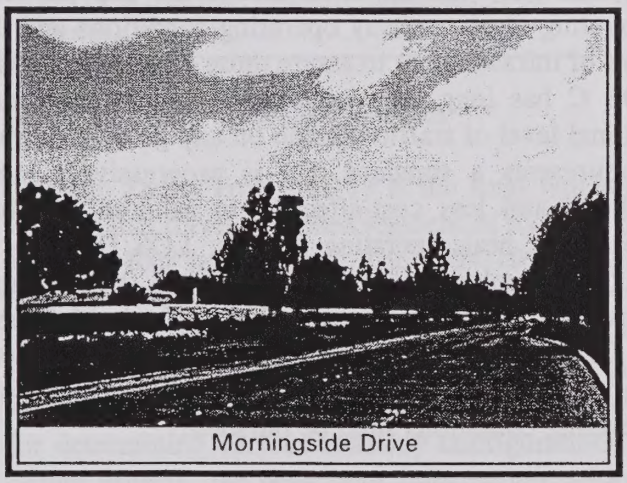
Program 1.A
The City shall review and update land use maps and information on the various types of open space and conservation lands in the community.

Program 1.B
The City shall evaluate all development proposals and identify their impact upon and compatibility with designated open space and conservation lands.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

PURPOSE

As development continues in Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley, traffic on local streets and regional arterials and highways will also continue to increase. In order to protect the City's character as a premier residential resort community, careful planning of the roadway network is essential. As the City's road system nears its capacity for handling traffic in a safe and efficient manner, the potential for delays and the risk of traffic accidents increases. In order to preserve the City's unique character while providing the safest and most efficient roadway system possible, the Circulation Element documents the current status of the City's road system, identifies problems and proposes solutions. In addition, the Circulation Element analyses future traffic impacts to the City due to inevitable growth in the City and region. The purpose of the Circulation Element is to develop an efficient, cost-effective and comprehensive transportation management strategy consistent with regional plans, local needs to maintain and improve mobility, and in a manner consistent with the goals and character of the community.



Morningside Drive

BACKGROUND

The Circulation Element is an outgrowth of City and regional land use planning. It also affects and is affected by a variety of community and environmental factors. The element has a direct relationship to the Land Use, Housing, Air Quality, Noise, Public Services and Facilities, and Economic Development Elements. The Community Design, Parks and Recreation and Flooding and Hydrology Elements are also related to the Circulation Element. The types and intensities of land uses in the City will predictably influence the types and volumes of traffic traveling the City's roads now and in the future.

The Circulation Element provides specific implementation programs, which address the existing traffic conditions in the General Plan study area, and are designed to prevent future deterioration of roadway capacity in the community. California Government Code describes conditions and data to be researched, analyzed and included within a General Plan Circulation Element. Government Code Section 65302(b) states that the General Plan shall include the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.

The local planning agency is also required to coordinate its Circulation Element provisions with the applicable regional transportation plan, as set forth in Government Code Sections 65103(f) and 65080. In the General Plan study area these regional agencies include the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Sunline Transit Authority. In addition, federal and state transportation planning must be coordinated with local planning pursuant to Section 134, Title 23 of the U.S. Code and California Government Code Section 65080(a), respectively.

Protection of air quality is also associated with growing traffic volumes and infrastructure demand, and requires careful analysis and planning to protect the community from unnecessarily high levels of locally generated pollutants. Vehicular emissions will increase with expanding population, miles traveled and less efficient travel conditions. However, the maintenance of adequate traffic flows, the prevention of traffic congestion caused by inadequate and/or failing roadways, and enhanced vehicle efficiencies will help preserve the air quality in the community.

As a comprehensive transportation management strategy, the Circulation Element has been developed based upon an analysis of existing conditions within the City, and future development as set forth by the General Plan Land Use Map (see Land Use Element). Growth in regional traffic has been based upon statistical trends, an assessment of long-term regional growth potential and the regional transportation model, CVATS, prepared by CVAG.

A variety of data were used to quantify and characterize existing traffic volumes and conditions along roadway links and at major intersections. In addition to traffic counts collected by the City, CVAG and CalTrans, two additional sets of data were collected to gauge existing conditions and provide a sound basis for projecting future traffic volumes. These various data are from the period of 1990 through 1995 and include mid-block roadway segments, as well as counts of intersection turning movements.

A traffic distribution process was utilized to analyze circulation and the effects of development on traffic. This process works directly with existing traffic volumes and existing street geometrics as its starting point. The term "geometrics" pertains to the dimensions and arrangements of the visible features of the roadway. These include pavement widths, lane configuration, barriers, slopes, drainage, interchanges, and other design features, which significantly affect roadway traffic operation, safety, and capacity.

Levels of Service

The available and utilized capacity of a roadway is typically characterized as "Level-of-Service". Level-of-Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing the efficiency of the flow of traffic. LOS includes a range of alphabetical connotations "A" through "F", used to characterize roadway operating conditions. LOS A represents the best/free flow conditions and LOS F indicates the worst/system failure. Levels of Service are represented as volume to capacity ratios, or vehicle demand divided by roadway capacity. Therefore, as the ratio approaches 1.00 the roadway approaches LOS F. Added travel and turning lanes increase capacity, as does the inclusion of raised medians and restricted access on a roadway. Raised medians increase roadway capacity by reducing the number of vehicle conflict points and improving traffic flows. Restricted access avoids loss of capacity caused by interruptions and disruptions to traffic flow resulting from vehicles coming onto or leaving the roadway. The table below defines the various LOS classifications.

Capacity is generally defined as the number of vehicles that may pass over a section of roadway in a given time period under prevailing conditions. Capacities of roadways are most restricted by intersection design and operation, which is discussed further below. Typically, the P.M. peak hour is the heaviest traffic flow of the day. However, it should be noted that in the planning area the peak hour operations are spread across a greater time period.

Acceptable Levels-of-Service

In recent years, traffic engineers and transportation planners have attempted to bridge the gap between providing ideal roadway operating conditions and the costs of infrastructure to assure those conditions. While LOS C has long been considered the desirable and optimal level of traffic volume on any given roadway, it represents a standard that is progressively more difficult and less cost-effective to achieve in urban areas. For peak operating periods, LOS D and/or a maximum volume to capacity ratio of 0.90 is now considered the generally acceptable service level. Where an LOS of E or worse exists along certain roadway segments and intersections, every measure to improve operating conditions shall be pursued.

Table III-4
Level of Service Description

Level of Service	Quality of Traffic Flow	Volume/Capacity Ratio
A	Low volumes, high speed; speed not restricted by other vehicles.	0.00-0.60
B	Operating speeds beginning to be affected by other traffic. Some drivers may begin to feel restricted with platoons of vehicles.	0.61-0.70
	Operating speeds and maneuverability closely controlled by other traffic; recommended ideal design standard. "Design Capacity"	
C	Occasionally drivers may have to wait through more than one red signal. Most drivers feel somewhat restricted, but not objectionably so.	0.71-0.80
D	Tolerable operating speeds; often used as design standard in urban areas. Increasing restriction at intersection, but no excessible backups. Drivers frequently have to wait through more than one red signal. This level is the lower limit of acceptable operation to most drivers.	0.81-0.90
E	All drivers wait through more than one red signal. At 100% capacity (V/C-1.0) it theoretically represents the most vehicles that a particular intersection can accommodate. "Maximum Capacity".	0.91-1.00
F	System failure; long queues of traffic; unstable flows; stoppages of long duration; traffic volume and speed can drop to zero; traffic volume will be less than the volume which occurs at Level of Service E	Not Meaningful

Source: Highway Capacity Manual, Highway Research Board-Special Report 87, National Academy of Science, Washington, D.C. 1985.

Average Daily Traffic Volumes

Average Daily Trips (ADT) is the total number of vehicles that travel a defined segment of roadway over a twenty-four hour period. The 1994/1995 two-way Average Daily Traffic Volumes (ADT) for the General Plan designated roadways are listed in Table III-5 and are graphically presented in Exhibit III-1. Although the ADT is a useful "benchmark" number for determining various roadway configurations and design aspects, the peak hour information, which is the highest volume of traffic to pass over a segment of roadway during an hour period, is also a useful means of determining a roadway's capacity and indirectly intersection levels of service. Traffic counts at intersections have provided the most detailed and most meaningful picture of present and future operating conditions of the roadway network.

Refined CVATS Traffic Model

Two separate but interdependent traffic modeling efforts were conducted concurrent with the preparation of the General Plan update, which evaluated existing roadway operating conditions and projected impacts associated with General Plan buildout and regional growth. The first involved the development of a pure focused version of the traffic model developed by CVAG called CVATS. CVATS is a large area network model developed for regional transportation planning. It breaks the Valley study area into relatively large zones (see Zone System, below), and uses a generalized land use designation system and trip generation/distribution/assignment procedures.

Utilizing the same procedures but on a more refined level, the General Plan traffic modeling process consists of defining the traffic analysis zones (TAZ)

and the roadway network, establishing efficient/logical traffic routes, collecting land use and socio-economic data on each TAZ, calculating trip generation in each TAZ, distributing traffic and its assignment to individual road segments.

Zone System

For purposes of General Plan transportation modeling, the City was subdivided into a system of 111 traffic analysis zones (TAZ), versus the 23 zones defined in the CVATS model. Based on the land uses within each TAZ, traffic volumes were generated and then distributed along the circulation system. The TAZ system produces a forecast of traffic volumes in the City, which approximates how actual traffic enters and utilizes the local roadway system. (Please refer to the Circulation section of the Rancho Mirage General Plan EIR for an illustration of the TAZ's and a complete breakdown of the various land uses within each TAZ).

The TAZ system for Rancho Mirage was designed utilizing current (1995) land use patterns, including provisions for approved but as yet unbuilt master planned communities. It is tailored specifically to the City of Rancho Mirage in order to provide the most accurate data possible. The model distributes the projected volume of traffic that will occur due to the buildout of the General Plan land use plan. From this information the design requirements to maintain acceptable traffic flows can be determined.

Trip Generation

Trip generation within each TAZ of the modeling area is based on land use data as designated by existing land uses and the General Plan Land Use Element. Average trip generation rates per the various land uses were derived from the CVAG CVATS model and were modified for City-specific application. The total number of vehicle trips produced in or attracted to a geographic area is directly related to the land use and demographic variables found in each TAZ. The model estimates the number of peak season vehicle trips that will be produced on an average weekday for each analysis zone.

The model relies on four separate "home-based" trip definitions and one "non-home-based" definition. Home-based trips either originate or are destined for the home. The non-home-based trip type refers to trips that do not originate and are not destined for home (e.g., traveling from work directly to dinner). The actual trip production rates, that is trips per land use type, are taken directly from the CVATS model. The model rates and procedures have been tested against the actual CVATS inputs, indicating close correspondence between the two and validating the trip generation portion of the model.

Trip Distribution and Traffic Assignment

Once the City has been broken down into the various TAZs and the trip generation for each has been calculated, the next step is to provide a general directional distribution of these trips and then to finally assign them to specific streets. Trips are either attractions or productions; that is, they are either drawing trips into the TAZ or are exporting trips. Typically, this distribution of trips is accomplished using a "gravity distribution model", based on the formula that the distribution of trips is proportional to the "attractiveness" of the land use and the distance (or travel time) from the point of trip production. Each type of trip or trip purpose has its own specific travel time distribution function or curve.

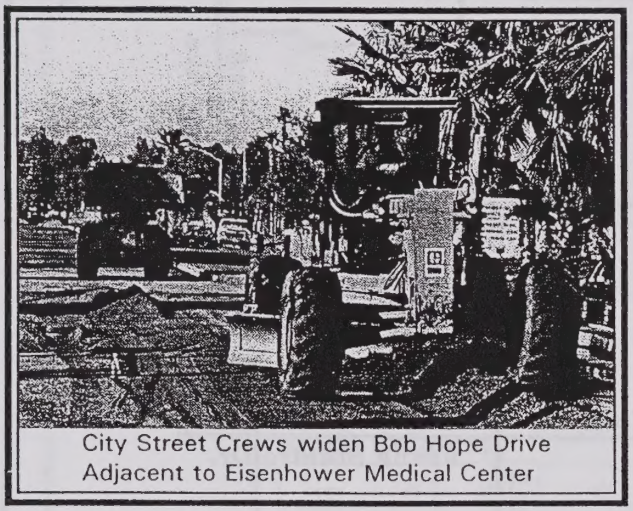
Traffic assignment involves the assigning to specific route paths the various trip interchanges between TAZs identified in the trip distribution process. The end result forecast of daily traffic volumes yields the aggregate assignment of trips to roadways between and connecting TAZs throughout the City. The traffic assignment process for the General Plan traffic model has also been adapted from procedures used in the CVATS model.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The City of Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley generally have grown into a largely continuous and relatively linear suburban development pattern, connected by state and interstate highways and a web of arterial roadways. This interconnection has been further supported by the design and impending development of the Mid-Valley Parkway, intended as an additional high capacity intercity link that connects communities and markets. The geography of the City and the Valley, the linear distribution of the

communities, the existing development pattern in the City itself and the current road designs are the physical influences and constraints affecting the City's roadway system.

The General Plan Circulation Element is the result of extensive baseline data collection, analysis of street design, and the identification of present operating conditions. The existing roadway network is further described in the General Plan EIR and its Traffic Study Appendix.



City Street Crews widen Bob Hope Drive
Adjacent to Eisenhower Medical Center

Regional Roadways

There are two regional routes serving the City, State Highway 111 and U.S. Interstate-10. Highway 111 extends from its juncture with Interstate-10 several miles west of Palm Springs and extends southeast to Brawley in the Imperial Valley. Interstate-10 connects the Los Angeles region with Arizona and other cities and states to the east.

These two important roadways provide regional and interstate connections for the City and the Coachella Valley. Finally, the planned development of the Mid-Valley Parkway would provide an additional intra-regional arterial that will extend from Highway 111 at Chino Canyon, southeast to Cook Street. Each of these regional facilities is briefly discussed below.

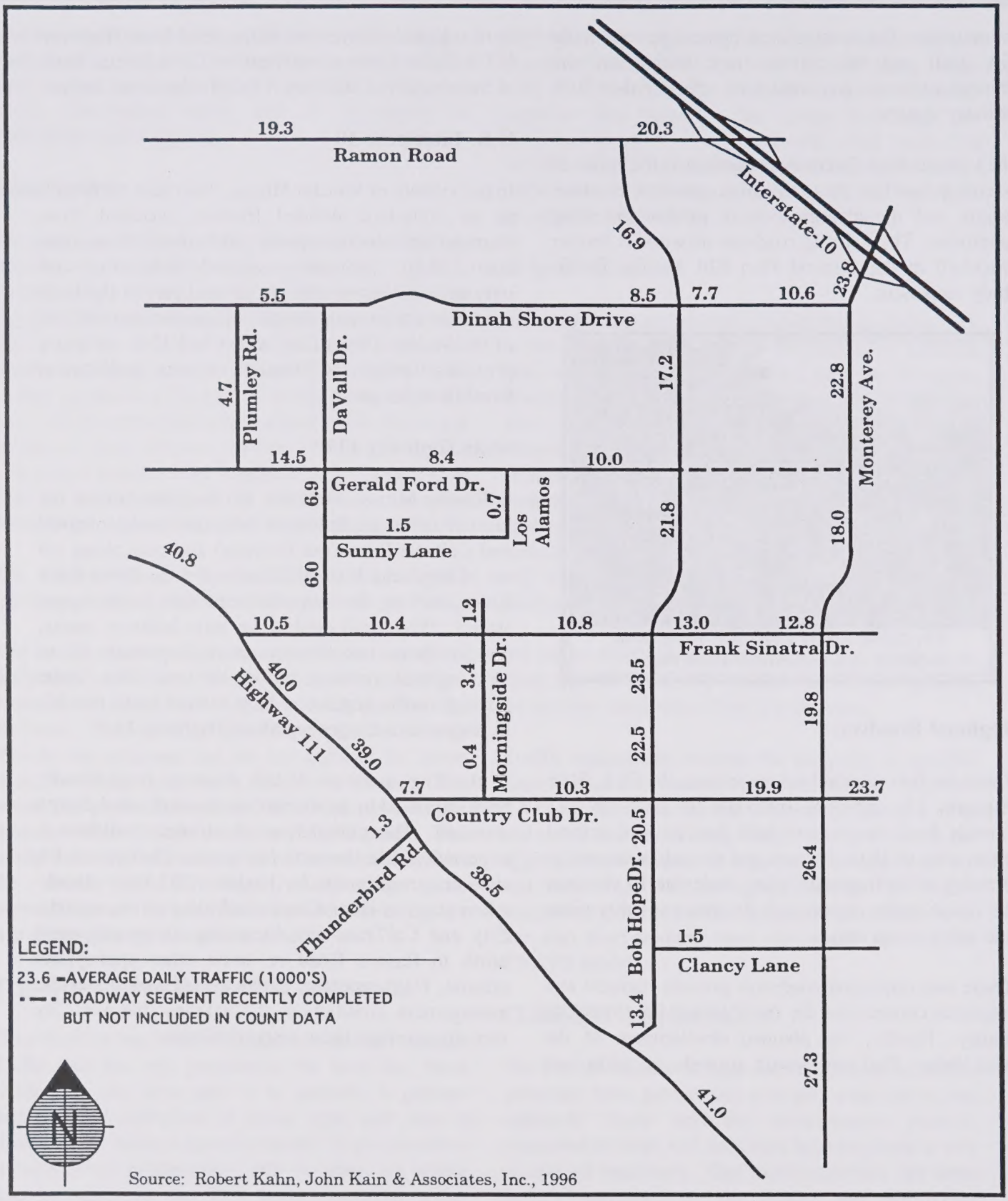
U.S. Interstate-10

In the vicinity of Rancho Mirage, Interstate-10 is built as an eight-lane divided freeway accessed from diamond intersections spaced a minimum of one mile apart. I-10 provides essential inter-city and inter-regional access and is a critical part of the local road network moving people and goods into and out of the Valley. Direct City access to I-10 is currently provided through the Monterey Avenue and Ramon Road interchanges.

State Highway 111

In Rancho Mirage, Highway 111 has been built at the location of the old Bradshaw Trail (see Archaeological and Cultural Resources Element) and runs along the toe of the Santa Rosa Mountains and the Whitewater River, serving the Cove Communities in the upper Valley. While still holding its state highway status, this roadway has become more important as an intra-regional connector serving the local cities. Some through-traffic appears to have moved north to I-10, in response to congestion along Highway 111.

In the City, portions of this roadway have already been improved to its ultimate six-lanes divided design standard. The completion of ultimate buildout is expected within the next few years. Changes to the state designated route for Highway 111 have already taken place in other Coachella Valley cities, and the City and CalTrans are discussing its reassignment north to Ramon Road or some other appropriate arterial. Until recently, Highway 111 was under the management jurisdiction of CalTrans, but the City recently assumed these responsibilities.



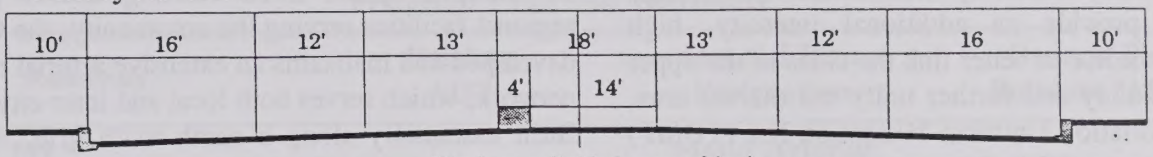
Source: Robert Kahn, John Kain & Associates, Inc., 1996

TERRA NOVA®
Planning & Research, Inc.

**City of Rancho Mirage
Existing Average Daily
Traffic (ADT) Volumes**

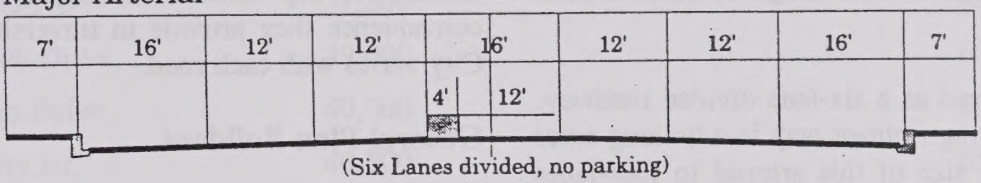
Exhibit
III-1

Primary Arterial 120'



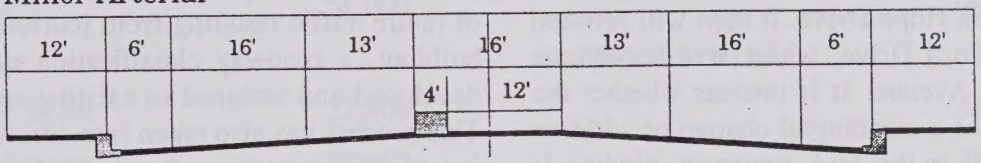
(Six Lanes divided, no parking)

Major Arterial * 110'



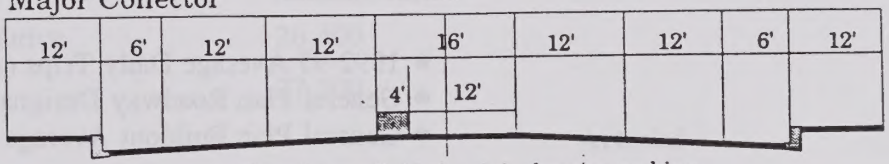
(Six Lanes divided, no parking)

Minor Arterial 110'



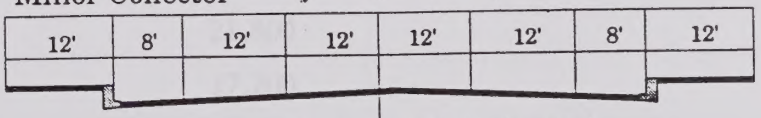
(Four Lanes divided, w/bike lane/no parking)

Major Collector 100'



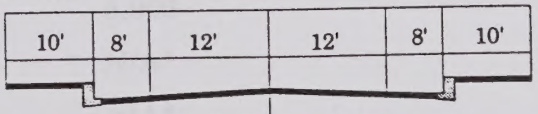
(Four Lanes divided, w/bike lane/no parking

Minor Collector 88'



(Four Lanes undivided, w/parking)

Local 60'



(Two Lanes w/parking)

*Highway 111 has special design geometrics. See Rancho Mirage Highway 111 Alignment Study, 1996.

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City of Rancho Mirage
Street Cross Sections

Exhibit
III-2

Mid-Valley Parkway

The Mid-Valley Parkway was conceived through CVAG to provide an additional intercity, high capacity connector to better link the cities of the upper Coachella Valley and further unify the market area. The Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program was established to assess impact fees to be applied to new development to help pay for the parkway, as well as a wide range of other arterial roadways.

Originally conceived as a six-lane divided roadway, problems in securing right-of-way in adjoining cities have reduced the size of this arterial to four-lanes divided. In Rancho Mirage, the Mid-Valley Parkway will extend east from Date Palm Drive along Dinah Shore Drive to Bob Hope Drive. It then will proceed south to Gerald Ford Drive, where it will continue east to Monterey Avenue. It is unclear whether the parkway constitutes a meaningful change or addition to arterial facilities in the area, however, funding is available from CVAG to assist in its design, development and construction.

Local Major Roadways

In addition to the three existing and/or planned regional facilities serving the community, the City has developed and maintains an extensive arterial roadway network, which serves both local and inter-city traffic. Built essentially along a north-south grid, the City road network has direct interconnections with major arterials passing through adjacent jurisdictions. The location of trip attractors along these roads or the convenience they provide in traversing through the City varies with each road.

General Plan Buildout

As a direct result of the analysis conducted on existing traffic and roadway conditions, as well as projections of future traffic resulting from (current) General Plan buildout, a roadway classification system has been developed and assigned to existing and future roads. This process has also taken into consideration special issues of concern and opportunities to enhance community circulation. Table III-5 lists these General Plan roadways and also provides the following information:

- 1992-95 Average Daily Trips (ADT)
- General Plan Roadway Designation.
- General Plan Buildout Average Daily Trips.

Table III-5
General Plan Road Analysis
Preferred Land Use Alternative

Roadway	Existing ADT	General Plan Designation	General Plan Buildout (ADT)
Highway 111		**Major Arterial**	
E of Bob Hope Drive	36,500		67,000
W of Bob Hope Drive	37,500		48,000
N of Country Club Drive	39,000		60,000
S of Frank Sinatra Drive	40,000		60,000
N of Frank Sinatra Dr.	40,800		65,000
U.S. Interstate-10		**Freeway**	
S of Ramon Road	58,000		147,000
Monterey Avenue		**Major Arterial**	
N of Dinah Shore Drive	23,800		51,000
N of Gerald Ford Drive	22,800		39,000
N of Frank Sinatra Dr.	18,000		49,000
N of Country Club Drive	18,800		39,000
S of Country Club Drive	26,400		30,000
S of Clancy Lane	27,300		28,000
Bob Hope Drive		**Arterial**	
N of Highway 111	13,400		25,000
N of Country Club Drive	22,500		26,000
N of Frank Sinatra Drive	21,800		34,000
N of Gerald Ford Drive	17,200		31,000
S of Ramon Road	16,900		33,000
Da Vall Drive		**Arterial**	
N of Frank Sinatra Drive	6,000		38,000
N of Gerald Ford	N/A*		33,000
N of Dinah Shore Drive	N/A*		34,000
Country Club Drive			
E of Monterey Avenue	23,700	**Arterial**	36,000
W of Monterey Ave	19,900		30,000
W of Bob Hope Drive	10,300	**Collector**	29,000

Continues on Next Page

Table III-5
General Plan Road Analysis
Preferred Land Use Alternative

Roadway	Existing ADT	General Plan Designation	General Plan Buildout (ADT)
E of Highway 111	7,700	**Collector**	24,000
Frank Sinatra Drive		**Arterial**	
W of Monterey Avenue	13,000		31,000
W of Bob Hope Drive	10,800		31,000
W of Morningside Drive	10,400		36,000
W of Da Vall	10,500		28,000
Gerald Ford Drive		**Arterial**	
W of Monterey Avenue	N/A*		35,000
W of Bob Hope Drive	10,000		39,000
W of Da Vall Drive	14,500		38,000
Dinah Shore Drive		**Arterial**	
W of Monterey Avenue	10,600		38,000
W of Bob Hope Drive	8,500		39,000
W of Da Vall Drive	5,500		32,000
Ramon Road		**Primary Arterial**	
E of Bob Hope Drive	20,300		62,000
W of Bob Hope Drive	19,300		46,000
W of DaVall Drive	N/A*		47,000

* Data Not Available

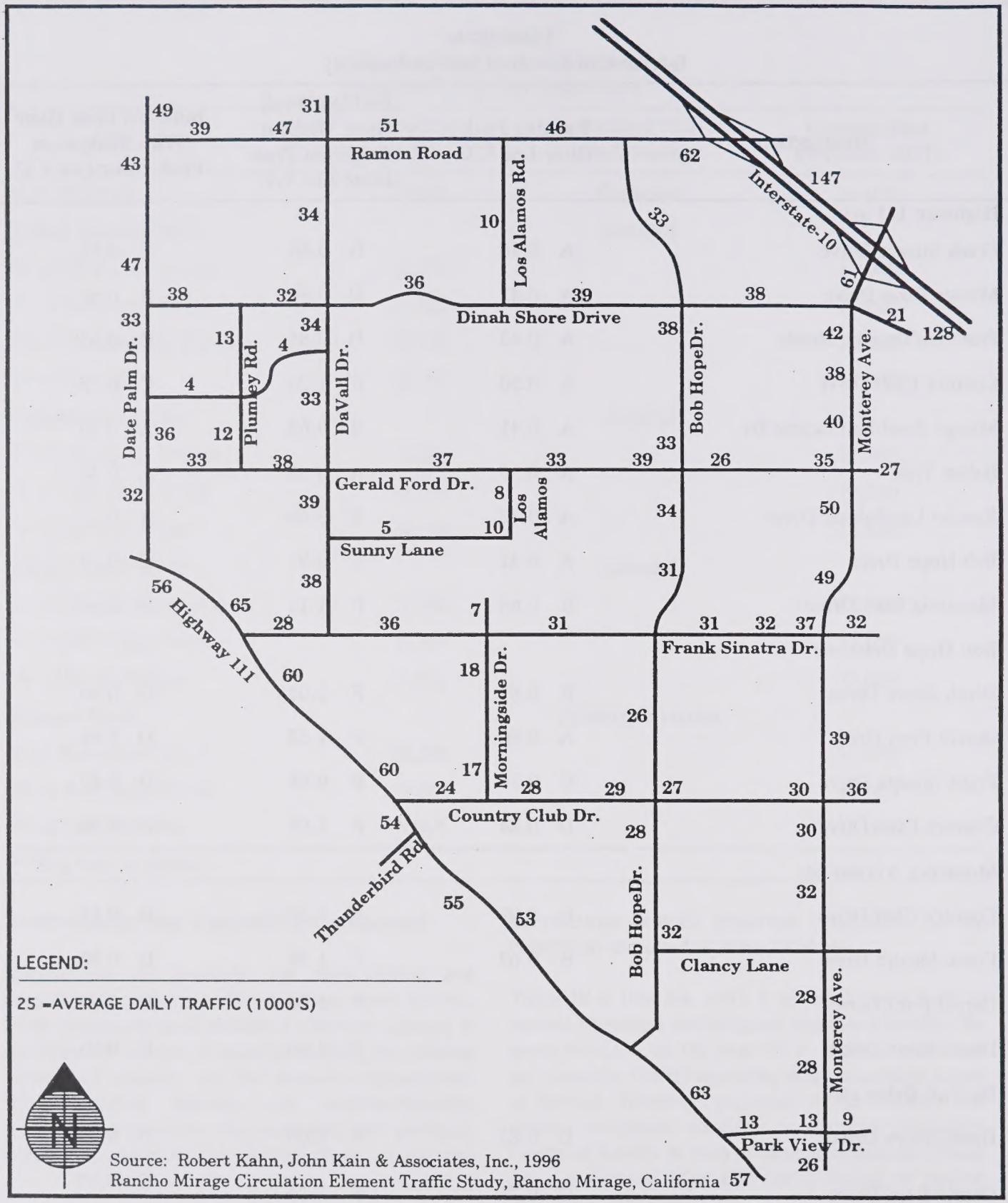
Intersections: The Controlling Component

Intersections are generally the most critical and constrained locations within the local street system. While measurement of mid-block roadway capacity is an important element of capacity analysis, the ultimate arbiters of capacity are the network intersections. While detailed analysis and recommendations regarding intersection improvements are generally outside the realm of the General Plan, several key intersections provide important perspective on the constraints expected at these locations.

Table III-6 lists the 1995 P.M. peak hour LOS at several important intersections and also identifies the projected LOS for the year 2015. Most intersections are currently (1995) operating at an acceptable Level of Service. However, projected traffic volumes will require mitigation measures to maintain acceptable Levels of Service at most of these intersections. Please see the General Plan EIR for a listing of needed mitigation measures.

Table III-6
Intersection Levels of Service/Capacity

Intersection	Existing Peak Hour Los V/C	Buildout Peak Hour Without Mitigation Peak Hour Los V/C	Buildout Peak Hour With Mitigation Peak Hour Los V/C
Highway 111 at:			
Frank Sinatra Drive	A 0.46	D 0.86	C 0.77
Mirage Cove Drive	A 0.43	D 0.84	B 0.64
Peterson/Thunder Roads	A 0.43	D 0.85	B 0.65
Country Club Drive	A 0.50	F 1.04	C 0.78
Mirage Road/San Jacinto Dr.	A 0.41	B 0.68	A 0.53
Indian Trail	A 0.35	A 0.58	A 0.44
Rancho Las Palmas Drive	A 0.42	B 0.66	A 0.57
Bob Hope Drive	A 0.41	E 0.91	C 0.73
Magnesia Falls Drive	B 0.66	F 1.14	D 0.90
Bob Hope Drive at:			
Dinah Shore Drive	B 0.63	F 2.01	D 0.90
Gerald Ford Drive	A 0.60	F 1.22	D 0.84
Frank Sinatra Drive	C 0.79	E 0.96	D 0.87
Country Club Drive	D 0.84	F 1.09	D 0.90
Monterey Avenue at:			
Country Club Drive	E 0.99	F 1.36	D 0.88
Frank Sinatra Drive	B 0.63	F 1.58	D 0.86
Gerald Ford Drive	- -	F 1.04	D 0.84
Dinah Shore Drive	- -	F 1.46	E 0.93
Da Vall Drive at:			
Dinah Shore Drive	D 0.83	F 2.00	D 0.90
Gerald Ford Drive	C 0.74	F 1.34	D 0.90



Source: Robert Kahn, John Kain & Associates, Inc., 1996
Rancho Mirage Circulation Element Traffic Study, Rancho Mirage, California

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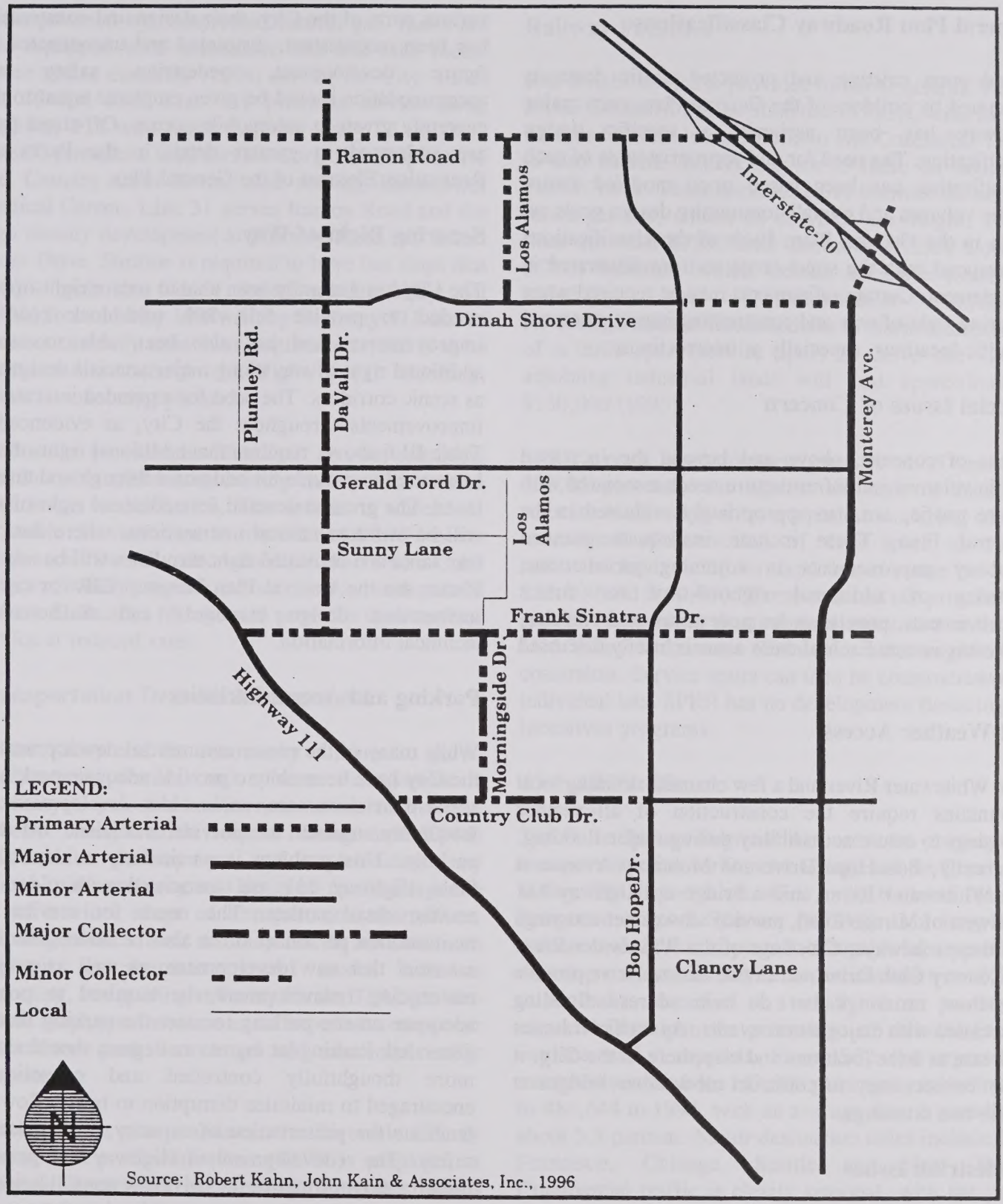
General Plan Buildout Traffic Assignments

Exhibit III-3



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City of Rancho Mirage
Roadway
Circulation Map

Exhibit
III-4

General Plan Roadway Classifications

Based upon existing and projected traffic demands generated by buildout of the General Plan, each major roadway has been assigned a specific design classification. The need for and appropriateness of each classification has been based upon modeled future traffic volumes and overall community design goals set forth in the General Plan. Each of the classifications correspond with the street cross sections illustrated in this element. Certain refinements may be required when securing right-of-way and constructing improvements at specific locations, especially at intersections.

Special Issues of Concern

Areas of concern, above and beyond the increased traffic volumes and infrastructure needs associated with future traffic, are also appropriately evaluated in the General Plan. These include inadequate planned roadway improvements in adjoining jurisdictions, securing of additional right-of-way for future improvements, provisions for pedestrians and bicycles, and other issues. Each of these areas is briefly discussed below.

All-Weather Access

The Whitewater River and a few channels draining local mountains require the construction of all-weather crossings to assure accessibility during major flooding. Currently, Bob Hope Drive and Monterey Avenue at the Whitewater River, and a bridge on Highway 111 just west of Mirage Road, provide all-weather crossings for these roadways. Crossings of the Whitewater River at Country Club Drive and Frank Sinatra Drive provide low-flow crossings but do not address flooding associated with major storm events. As traffic volumes increase at these locations and elsewhere in the City, it may be necessary to construct all-weather bridges at these two crossings.

Pedestrian Issues

Pedestrian and other non-motor circulation is encouraged in the City wherever possible. The provision of sidewalks, bike lanes and off-street trails is especially important along major roadways in the community. While sidewalks have been constructed in various parts of the City, their design and construction has been inconsistent, disjointed and unconnected. In future development, pedestrian safety and accommodation should be given emphasis equal to that currently given to automobile access. Off-street trails are addressed in greater detail in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan.

Securing Right of Way

The City has generally been able to secure right-of-way needed to provide full-width mid-block roadway improvements, and has also been able to secure additional right-of-way along major arterials designated as scenic corridors. The need for expanded intersection improvements throughout the City, as evidenced in Table III-6 above, requires that additional right-of-way be secured to provide for additional through and turning lanes. The greatest demand for additional right-of-way will be at future critical intersections, where dual left turn lanes and dedicated right turn lanes will be needed. Please see the General Plan Program EIR for critical intersection design standards and traffic-related technical information.

Parking and Access Facilities

While many of the newer commercial developments in the City have been able to provide adequate parking to serve their customers, some older developments are frequently unable to provide sufficient off-street parking. This problem is particularly evident along State Highway 111 and associated with older and smaller retail outlets. The needs for service and maintenance personnel must also be addressed. It is essential that new development, as well as projects undergoing redevelopment, be required to provide adequate on-site parking to meet the parking demand generated. Parking lot ingress and egress should also be more thoughtfully controlled and consolidation encouraged to minimize disruption to traffic flow and facilitate the preservation of capacity, while assuring safety. The redevelopment of Highway 111 provides important opportunities for driveway consolidation.

Public Transportation

The Sunline Transit Authority is the provider of public transit service within the City of Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley. The Sunline fleet consists of new

buses powered by compressed natural gas. Buses are also equipped with wheelchair lifts and bike racks. Three routes currently (1996) service the City: Lines 31, 50 and 111. Line 111 provides service along Highway 111 with buses stopping every 25 minutes. Line 50 provides a loop service along Bob Hope Drive and Country Club Drive, also serving Eisenhower Medical Center. Line 31 serves Ramon Road and the high density development at Plumley Road and Dinah Shore Drive. Sunline is required to have bus stops that comply with the federal Americans Disability Act (ADA) for access by 1997. Along Highway 111 access does not currently meet these requirements, but is to be constructed concurrent with Highway 111 widening, which is now being planned.

Sunline also provides the "Sun Dial" service, consisting of a fleet of small buses providing curb-to-curb service from home to destination. The service is wheelchair accessible. Services must be requested at least 72-hours in advance. The City also subsidizes the "Dial-a-Cab" program, which provides cab service for residents and visitors in Rancho Mirage and provides door-to-door service at reduced rates

Transportation Demand Management

As the Valley and the community continue to grow, transportation demand and systems management is necessary to preserve and increase available roadway capacity. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) involves the development and implementation of policies, plans and programs designed to encourage the use of a wider range of transportation alternatives, including public transit and bicycles. In addition to an emphasis on alternative travel modes such as carpooling, van pooling and mass transit, TDM can also include employee flex-time as an important component that reduces peak hour travel and associated traffic congestion.

In response to state mandates, the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) prepared a regional Congestion Management Program, which required Rancho Mirage and other cities to prepare TDM ordinances or risk the loss of federal transportation funds. The City adopted its TDM ordinance in April, 1992.

Railway Facilities

Rail freight service is provided to the Coachella Valley by the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR), with freight transfer facilities located in Indio and Coachella. There is also current Amtrak service to Indio on Southern Pacific's line. These facilities carry between 30 and 40 trains per day, almost all of which are freight. These lines are what SPRR calls Centralized Track Control (CTC) facilities, which include extensive electronic switching and communication facilities. Re-configuration of these facilities to allow construction of a drill spur (service spur) to serve the City's adjoining industrial lands will cost approximately $130,000 (1995).

SPRR pays a reimbursement over 10 to 15 years of $20.00 per train car against the cost of facilities relocation, allowing at least a partial recouping of this investment. Construction of drill spurs to serve industrial lands could be expected to range between $55,000 and $ 60,000. These costs do not provide for special engineering requirements associated with the Mid-Valley Stormwater Channel or other engineering constraints. Service spurs can then be constructed onto individual lots. SPRR has no development financing or incentives programs.

Aircraft Traffic

The Palm Springs Regional Airport is the primary air transportation link for Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley. The airport is classified in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) as a long-haul commercial service airport. It is capable of supporting non-stop commercial service to destinations over 1,500 miles and is classified as a small hub air passenger airport based upon the percentage of national airline enplanements it supports. Since 1972, the airport has increased service from 143,809 passenger enplanements to 486,644 in 1994, with an average annual growth of about 5.5 percent. Major destination cities include San Francisco, Chicago, Seattle and New York. Commercial traffic is clearly seasonal, with the peak season being the January-February-March period and the slowest period occurring during the summer months. Commercial operations are expected to continue to grow, with passenger enplanements projected to reach approximately 560,000 by 1999 and about 809,256 by the year 2015.

Major Utility Corridors

The General Plan also plays an important role in assuring the planned provision of major corridors and easements for the transport of natural gas, electricity, communications, domestic water and sewerage, and storm drainage. In many instances, the need for utility corridors is met through the provision of easements in or adjacent to City streets and along common lot lines. The planning of future land use, the division of land and the processing of development applications requires communication and coordination with utility companies and other service providers, to assure the availability and provision of easements and rights-of-way for the extension of roads and utility lines and services (Also see Public Utilities Element).

Bicycle Facilities

Currently (1996), the City has only a partially integrated system of sidewalks, bicycle lanes or multi-use trails within roadway designs and rights-of-way. Carefully thought out and planned alternative transportation corridors (sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-purpose trails) will enhance and give greater opportunity to the use of various alternative modes of transportation. Future bike routes will serve as a safe route for intra-city bicycle traffic. These routes should be clearly marked and striped and should be designed as one-way bike routes to flow in the same direction as the adjacent automobile traffic. Combination sidewalk/bikeways require an eight foot width. The multi-use trails will also serve as links to recreational facilities throughout the community (See the Parks and Recreation Element for details on design standards of the bike lanes and trails network).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City should continue to review and monitor land use trends and their associated changes in traffic volumes and patterns, and make periodic adjustments in planning and program implementation by utilizing roadway improvement and maintenance management programs. This will be accomplished by regularly monitoring traffic on major roadways and by conducting ongoing inventories of current traffic and circulation patterns; this should be done at a minimum of once every two years. The City should continue to coordinate with state and regional agencies that have jurisdiction over the state highways in the community.

Through the implementation of this element and involvement with regional, state and federal regulators, the City will progressively alleviate current problems and avoid future system inadequacies.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques are widely used to extend or preserve capacity of existing roadways. These techniques may include efforts to encourage car or van pooling and the continued utilization and future expansion of public transit services provided by Sunline Transit.

Special intersection design that allows dedicated right turn overlap signal phasing to provide free right turns where appropriate, and other system enhancements, also provide cost effective solutions. Detailed analysis is periodically undertaken for the intersections identified in City engineering studies and the General Plan to refine realignments and design engineering, and to assure availability of necessary right-of-way to provide for adequate long-term Levels of Service. Other transportation management techniques that address specific issues of concern within the City of Rancho Mirage include limiting, and in some cases restricting access onto Highways 111, Monterey Avenue and other major roadways. This can be accomplished by combining driveways, installing raised center medians to restrict turning movements, adding travel and turning lanes, and minimizing the number of intersections. Finally, a concerted effort by the City to move towards a balance between local jobs and housing, and encouraging mixed-use development will minimize future traffic volumes in City. All of these measures are discussed in detail in the General Plan Traffic Study and EIR.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

A safe, efficient, attractive and economical circulation network meeting current and future demands in a manner consistent with the resort residential character of the community.

Policy 1
All mid-block street segments shall operate at LOS "C" or better.

Policy 2
The City shall make best efforts to assure that all intersections operate at LOS "D" or better during the peak hour of traffic.

Policy 3
The City shall make best efforts to assure that traffic generated by the General Plan's land use designations shall be within the level of service standards for the City's planned circulation system.

Policy 4
The City's street system shall be designed and constructed to accommodate the traffic to be generated by build-out of the General Plan land use designations.

Program 4.A
The General Plan master traffic study shall be periodically updated to maintain its relevance and correspondence to the General Plan land use designations and the design and construction of City streets.

Program 4.B
Prepare a master plan of roads, which includes standards for ultimate rights-of-way and pavement width, and provides a schedule for securing right-of-way and constructing improvements needed to maintain the levels of service standards set forth in the Circulation Element.

Program 4.C
Establish and maintain a roadways pavement management program (PMP) that sets forth budgeting, timelines and schedules for maintenance of existing roadways in the community.

Policy 5
Development proposals with the potential to generate traffic volumes or other impacts not adequately evaluated in the Circulation Element and the Program EIR may be required to prepare a traffic analysis consistent and compatible with the City's Master General Plan Traffic Model.

Policy 6
The number of access points and intersections along arterials shall be limited in order to preserve mid-block and intersection capacities and to maintain public safety.

Program 6.A
Prepare a design specifications manual which includes but is not necessarily limited to standards for major roadway intersection spacing, access restrictions and separations, median island opening separation, turning movement restrictions, turning lanes, driveways and gated entries, roadway parking restrictions, and street lighting and signage.

Program 6.B
The City shall facilitate the consolidation of access drives along Highway 111 in a manner which minimize conflicting turning movements and maximizes the use of existing and planned signalized intersections.

Policy 7
Participate in a wide range of regional transportation planning and programs to improve the capacity, efficiency and safety of the shared circulation system.

Program 7.A
The City shall be represented on all regional transportation committees and shall regularly coordinate with other local agencies regarding their plans, programs and services which affect the quality and safety of the Rancho Mirage roadway system.

Program 7.B
Study the need and feasibility of providing additional all-weather crossings along critical roadways, and develop and implementation plan and schedule, if appropriate

Policy 8
Develop a system of continuous and convenient bicycle routes and multi-use trails to places of employment, shopping centers, schools and other high activity areas with potential for increased bicycle use.

Program 8.A
The City's trails master plan shall include design standards, guidelines and scheduling for facilities which provide bicycle routes to activity areas.

Policy 9
The local street system within developing neighborhoods shall be established through a cooperative public/private planning process.

Program 9.A
An internal circulation plan shall be prepared for the residential area north of Clancy Lane, including proposed access points on Bob Hope Drive and Monterey Avenue, and shall be incorporated into the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

Program 9.B
An internal circulation plan shall be prepared for the western half of Section 30, including proposed access points on major interior and exterior streets. Said plan shall be incorporated into the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

Policy 10
Streets within planned residential areas shall be installed and maintained as private streets, and shall be developed in accordance with development standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable standards and guidelines

Policy 11
City truck routes shall be designated and limited to Monterey Avenue, Highway 111 and Ramon Road.

HOUSING ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Rancho Mirage Housing Element is to provide both the citizens and public officials with a comprehensive understanding of the housing needs within the City, and to set forth policies and programs that will enable the City to reach its defined housing goals. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that every Rancho Mirage resident secures a safe and decent place to live within a satisfactory environment, the Housing Element promotes a closer coordination of housing policies and programs at local, state and federal levels since the attainment of housing goals depends upon the shared commitment of all levels of government.

BACKGROUND

Legal Requirements of the Housing Element

State law passed in 1980 (AB 2853-Roos Bill) describes the requirements for Housing Elements: the need to include an assessment of regional housing needs, the role of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in the review of elements, and procedures and timing for the adoption of the Housing Element.

According to that law, this Housing Element must contain three parts:

(1) an assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of those needs;

(2) a statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing; and

(3) a program which sets forth a five year schedule of actions to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Element, guided by the following State housing objectives:

(a) Provision of decent housing for all persons regardless of age, race, sex, marital status, source of income, or other arbitrary factors;

(b) Provision of adequate housing by location, type, price, and tenure; and

(c) Development of a balanced residential environment including access to jobs, community facilities, and services.

Chapter 1140, Statutes of 1989, amends Housing Element law [(Section 65583 (c)] to require the housing program of an element to include, by January 1, 1990, a description of the use of moneys in a Redevelopment Agency's Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund, if the locality has established a redevelopment project area pursuant to the Community Redevelopment Law [Division 24 (commencing with Section 33000) of the Health and Safety Code].

At the time of this writing, certain requirements of Housing Element law have been suspended due to lack of funding for the preparation of regional needs analysis. This element has been completed to meet all requirements of the law for the planning period from 1996 through 2001. The methodology used to calculate the City's need for housing was obtained from the Southern California Association of Governments. Any amendments made to the methodology to better reflect growth conditions in the City are explained in the text.

At Risk Analysis

Chapter 1451, Section 65583 requires each city and county to adopt programs for preserving existing affordable housing. The City does not currently have any units at risk of terminating subsidies. A complete analysis is included in this document.

Relationship to Other Elements

The Housing Element is a policy document identifying present and future housing needs and establishing programs and implementation policies which ensure a good faith effort to meet such needs. Within the

context of the General Plan, the Housing Element functions as an integral part of a comprehensive growth plan. For instance, projected housing need relates to residential land use acreages and policies to accommodate the City's fair share of households within all income levels.

The Housing Element has been closely correlated with the following mandated General Plan Elements:

Land Use	Noise
Circulation	Open Space
Conservation	Safety

Review of State and Local Housing Plans and Objectives

California's Statewide Housing Plan, prepared in 1977, defines the five housing issues facing California:

1. Existing neighborhoods and housing should be conserved and improved.

2. The rising cost of new housing should be kept down.

3. Adequate housing for low and moderate income households should be found, and each jurisdiction should meet its appropriate share of regional housing demand.

4. Housing discrimination should be eliminated.

5. Housing information should be available for both developers and consumers.

The State Housing Plan recognizes several important guiding principles, among which is the belief that the private sector is, and should be, the major provider of housing. The Government's role is to do what it can to make the private market responsive to the needs of all income, age, race, and ethnic groups and to help private industry provide a wide variety of housing types, sizes, and prices.

In 1980, Assembly Bill 2853 (chaptered as Government Code Section 65580 et. seq.) was approved by the State Legislature. Its purpose was to amend and add to Title 7 of the Government Code. The new legislation requires counties and cities to prepare substantially more detailed housing elements.

The 1993 Rancho Mirage Housing Element was prepared in compliance with these requirements while reflecting the unique characteristics of the community. The Housing Element further supports the State objectives and addresses the basic housing issues within the community with the inclusion of the following goals:

1. To provide affordable housing for people and households with special needs including the homeless, elderly, handicapped, large families, single parent families, female headed households, first time homebuyers, and workers employed in Rancho Mirage.

2. To develop, in accordance with density, building, and environmental standards, new affordable housing to expand housing opportunities for all residents of the City.

3. To provide a variety of housing types to meet the diversity of needs throughout the City's residential neighborhoods.

4. To remove or mitigate constraints to the provision of affordable housing, both governmental and non-governmental.

5. To preserve the quality and affordability of the City's existing housing stock and ensure all dwelling units are safe and sanitary.

6. To eliminate discrimination in housing with regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, family status, or sexual preference, and to ensure equal housing opportunities exist for all groups.

Evaluation of Existing Housing Element Goals

The goals established in the 1993 Housing Element are evaluated for completion and effectiveness in this section. It must be noted that since the drafting of the City's last Housing Element, the City established its Housing Authority, which has implemented a number of the goals, policies and programs which were included in the last element. As a result, the General

Plan Advisory Committee responsible for this element streamlined the policies and programs to enable the Housing Authority implement new projects and programs.

Goal 1

To provide affordable housing for people and households with special needs, including the homeless, elderly, handicapped, large families, single parent families, female headed households, first time homebuyers, and workers employed in Rancho Mirage.

The City has implemented a number of programs which assist special needs households, both within the City and throughout the Coachella Valley. These include:

- The City has established its own Housing Authority, through the Redevelopment Agency. The Housing Authority has actively pursued and supported special needs housing through assistance programs for low income senior households, the development of plans for senior housing projects, and the purchase of land for use in affordable housing projects in the future.

- The City, through its Special Assistance Fund, annually contributes to services such as Nightingale Manor, a regional homeless shelter.

- Special Zoning Ordinance procedures and standards have been adopted for senior group housing projects.

- The Monterey Specific Plan was developed by the City to include a 20-acre affordable housing project which is planned for family ownership housing. Further discussion regarding the on-going planning of this project can be found in the text of this Element.

Goal 2

To develop, in accordance with density, building, and environmental standards, new affordable housing to expand housing opportunities for all residents of Rancho Mirage.

The City Housing Authority has purchased land for the eventual development of affordable housing on San Jacinto Drive. The Monterey Specific Plan also meets this goal, by providing a 20 acre site for affordable single family development which will meet the City's standards. The Housing Authority has also worked in close cooperation with private developers to develop financing plans which combine private, City and other funding sources to provide senior and family housing in the community.

Goal 3

To provide a variety of housing types to meet the diversity of needs throughout the City's residential neighborhoods.

The City's efforts in preparing the Monterey Specific Plan, as well as the purchase of the Blue Heaven Mobilehome Park in 1994 clearly respond to this goal in the previous Housing Element. The City is currently also funding projects to provide for the rehabilitation of the now vacant Whispering Waters project, which will provide affordable housing for 29 senior households.

Goal 4

To remove or mitigate constraints to the provision of affordable housing both governmental and non-governmental.

Through the establishment of more lenient standards for affordable housing projects, including dwelling unit size requirements, and a density bonus of up to 50%, the City has significantly decreased the constraints to the construction of affordable housing.

Goal 5

To preserve the quality and affordability of the City's existing housing stock and ensure all dwelling units are safe and sanitary.

The City's continued efforts in Code Enforcement, as well as its financial efforts in purchasing and rehabilitating its mobilehome parks, have served to meet this goal.

The City has also established the Home Improvement Program (more fully described below), to assist lower income households in improving their property and repairing health and safety risks. The Housing Authority budgeted $250,000 in the 1995-1996 fiscal year for this program.

Goal 6

To eliminate discrimination in housing with regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, family status or sexual preference, and to ensure equal housing opportunities exist for all groups.

The City continues to implement its rent control ordinance for mobilehome parks, and enforces the provisions of all state and federal legislation regarding non-discrimination in housing.

HOUSING NEEDS

In order to understand the housing needs of Rancho Mirage, it is important to first look at the make up of the community and its demographics.

REGIONAL SETTING

Rancho Mirage is located in the upper Coachella Valley, a subregion of Riverside County. The County experienced extremely rapid growth in the 1980's. County population sky rocketed from 663,923 in 1980 to 1,110,000 in 1990, an increase of 67%. The California Department of Finance further estimates that population in the County rose to 1,393,500 in 1995. This rapid rate of growth brings opportunities as well as the challenges of managing urbanization.

The upper Coachella Valley's economic base is heavily dependent on tourism, the area's original and primary industry. Rapid growth in employment in this industry heavily impacts the need for affordable housing because of traditionally low wages.

Rancho Mirage is world renowned as an exceptionally high quality resort and residential community. The City's policies, ordinances, and regulations protect and preserve this quality of life.

Demographic Characteristics

Age Distribution

The median age in Rancho Mirage is 59.1. The 1990 Census presents the following age distribution of the population.

Table III-7
Age Distribution, 1990

Age	Number	% of Total
Under 18	963	10%
18-20	151	1%
21-24	258	3%
25-44	1,774	18%
45-54	1,137	12%
55-59	734	7%
60-64	1,055	11%
65+	3,706	38%
Total	9,778	100%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Ethnic Characteristics

Table III-9 compares the ethnic distribution for Rancho Mirage in 1980 and 1990.

Table III-8
Ethnic Characteristics-1980 and 1990

	1980	1990
White	94.0%	90.5%
Hispanic	4.9%	6.9%
Black	.2%	1.3%
Native American	N/A	.3%
Asian	N/A	.9%
Other	.9%	.1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Source: 1980 U.S. Census; 1990 U.S. Census

Although the community remains predominantly white, the data shows an increase in minority population. This is representative of a trend throughout Southern California.

Population Growth

Rancho Mirage has shown steady population growth throughout the last decade, in keeping with the pattern of growth experienced by Riverside County.

Table III-9
Population Growth-1985 to 1995

Year	Square Miles	Population	% Increase in Population
1985	21.9	7,675	4.4
1986	21.9	8,025	4.6
1987	21.9	8,225	2.5
1988	21.9	8,600	4.6
1989	22.3	9,000	4.7
1990	22.3	9,275	3.1
1991	23.0	9,996	7.8
1992	23.0	10,466	4.7
1993	23.0	10,545	1.0
1994	23.0	10,452*	N.A.
1995	24.0	10,558	1.0

Source: City of Rancho Mirage; California Dept. of Finance (DOF) *Adjustments made by DOF.

Major Employers

Table III-10 shows the largest employers located in the City of Rancho Mirage.

Table III-10
Major Employers-1995

Employers	Number of Employees
Eisenhower Medical Center	1,800
Westin Mission Hills Resort	620
Marriott's Rancho Las Palmas	500
Ritz-Carlton Hotel	375
Home Depot	182
Heart Institute of the Desert	80
Pavilions Grocery Store	75
Von's Grocery Store	68
Rancho Mirage Post Office	52
City of Rancho Mirage	49
Rancho Mirage Elementary	32
Best, Best & Kreiger (Law Firm)	37
Convention & Visitors Bureau	35
Long's Drug Store	35
Braille Institute	27
Riverside County Offices	27
Merrill Lynch	23

Source: City of Rancho Mirage

Retail is also a major employer, although made up of many small businesses rather than a few large employers.

Housing Characteristics

Housing needs in Rancho Mirage are a function of affordability, not supply. At first glance, it appears there are more than enough housing units for every household in the City; 9,693 units with a total 1995 population of 10,745 people. This fails to recognize that many of these units are owned as second or vacation homes.

The 1990 Census showed a total of 9,360 housing units in the City.

Table III-11
Housing Characteristics-1990

Units in Structure	Number
Single Family Detached	2,996
Single Family Attached	3,875
2-4 Units, Multi-family	602
5-9 Units, Multi-family	173
10 or more Units, Multi-family	454
Mobilehome, Trailer, Other	1,260
Total	**9,360**

Source: 1990 Census

The State Department of Finance updated this distribution as of January 1, 1995.

Table III-12
Housing Characteristics-1995

Units in Structure	Number
Single Family Detached	3,342
Single Family Attached	3,919
2-4 Units, Multi-family	570
5+ Units, Multi-family	776
Mobile homes	1,086
Total	**9,693**

Source: State Department of Finance

The apparent drop in Mobile homes from 1,260 to 1,086 is the result of the deannexation of a portion of a mobilehome park previously located in Rancho Mirage. The park was annexed to the City of Cathedral City.

Vacancy Status

The 1990 Census showed an overall vacancy rate of 48%. Correcting for seasonal or recreational units, which are considered vacant by the Census but are not available or used for permanent occupancy, the vacancy rate decreases to 15.6%.

Table III-13
Vacancy Status-1990

Unit Type	Number of Units Vacant	% of Total Units City-Wide
For Rent	186	2.00%
For Sale	449	4.80%
Rented or Sold, not occupied	100	1.00%
Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	2,963	31.70%
Migrant Workers	1	0.01%
Other Vacant	828	8.80%
Total	**4,527**	**48.31%**

Source: 1990 Census, American Development Consultants

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure for occupied units only is shown in Table III-14.

Table III-14
Housing Tenure-1990

	Number of Units	Per Unit percentage
Owner Occupied	3,900	81%
Renter Occupied	933	19%
Total	**4,833**	**100%**

Source: 1990 Census

Current Housing Needs

Housing need is defined by the State Department of Housing and Community Development in these ways:

- overcrowding (more than 1.01 persons per room)
- overpaying (paying more than 30% of household income for shelter)
- residing in substandard units

The 1990 Census provides current data on overcrowding by tenure.

Table III-15
Overcrowding
Owner-Occupied Units-1990

Persons Per Room	Number of Households
0.5 or less	3,525
0.51 to 1.00	351
1.01 to 1.50	14
1.51 to 2.00	8
2.01 or more	2

Source: 1990 Census

Table III-16
Overcrowding,
Renter-Occupied Units-1990

Persons Per Room	Number of Households
0.5 or less	619
0.51 to 1.00	245
1.01 to 1.50	21
1.51 to 2.00	20
2.01 or more	28

Source: 1990 Census

Based on this data, a total of 93 households in Rancho Mirage are overcrowded. This is more than double the 45 units identified in the 1980 Census as being overcrowded.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) estimated existing households (1988) over-paying for shelter as part of the 1989-1994 Regional Housing Needs Analysis (RHNA). This data is shown in Tables III-17 and III-18.

Table III-17
Households Earning 80% of Median Income or Less, Paying 30% or More of Gross Income for Shelter by Tenure-1988

	Total Overpaying	Very Low Income	Low Income
Renters	214	92	122
Owners	160	50	110
Total	374	142	232

Source: SCAG RHNA, 1988

Table III-18
Total Lower Income Households Overpaying for Shelter 1988

	Number	% of Total Households
Total Households in City	3,895	
Total Lower Income Households (80% or less median income)	1,243	32%
Very Low Income Households Overpaying	142	4%
Low Income Households Overpaying	232	6%
Total Lower Income Households Overpaying	**374**	**10%**

Source: SCAG RHNA, 1988

The 1990 Census data can be used to update the calculations of households overpaying for shelter. This data is shown in Tables III-19 and III-20.

Table III-19
Percentage of Household Income Spent On Housing: Owner Occupied Units-1990

Income	0 to 19%	20 to 24%	25 to 29%	30 to 34%	35%	Over +30%
Less than $10,000	7	0	14	0	138	138
$10,000-19,000	45	9	9	5	152	157
$20,000-34,999	68	35	58	20	158	178
$35,000-49,999	103	49	68	19	87	106
$50,000+	921	183	130	74	265	339
Total	**1,444**	**276**	**279**	**118**	**800**	**918**

Source: 1990 Census

Table III-20
Percentage of Household Income Spent On Housing: Renter Occupied Units-1990
Percentage of Income Spent on Housing

Income	0 to 19%	20 to 24%	25 to 29%	30 to 34%	35%	Over +30%
Less than $10,000	0	0	0	0	138	138
$10,000 to $19,000	0	20	0	0	188	188
$20,000 to $34,999	72	16	60	55	59	114
$35,000 to $49,999	40	0	27	0	29	29
$50,000+	36	46	10	17	0	17
Total	**148**	**82**	**97**	**72**	**414**	**486**

Source: 1990 Census

Two factors are evident: The estimates of households overpaying, prepared by SCAG in 1988 were significantly lower than the actual Census reveals; and lower income households are much more likely to overpay for housing than higher income families. Both of these factors are the result of housing costs.

The City of Rancho Mirage has had a high median price for both single family owner occupied units and rental units. The 1980 and 1990 median prices for housing are shown in Table III-23.

Table III-21
1980 and 1990 Median Housing Prices

	1980	1990	% Increase
Median Single Family Purchase Price	$137,000	$252,500	84%
Median Mortgage Costs (PITI)	N/A	$1,708	N/A
Median Rental Rate	$344	$620	80%

Source: 1980 Census, 1990 Census

The economic recession of the last several years has, however, influenced sale prices for homes. The median sales price for a home in Rancho Mirage in 1994 was $218,750, down 15% from 1990, according to statistical data maintained by the Board of Realtors. If a similar reduction in median mortgage costs is calculated, it can be estimated that in 1994, the average household was paying $1,452 per month.

The 1990 Census calculates the median annual income for households in Rancho Mirage to be $45,064. Using the allowable monthly payment for housing of 30% of gross household income, the median income family can afford a monthly housing payment of $1,126 (Principal, Interest, Taxes, and Insurance). This is below the median housing mortgage costs of $1,452 estimated for 1994.

Table III-22
1990 Rancho Mirage Median Income Affordability

Median Household Monthly Income (1990)	$3,755
30% of Household Income Housing Payment (PITI)	$1,126
Affordability Gap	$582

Source: American Development Consultants

Based on 1995 estimates, the following Table shows that the affordability gap has narrowed, due primarily to the recessionary period experienced throughout California.

Table III-23
1995 Rancho Mirage Median Income Affordability Gap

Median Family Monthly Income (1995)	$4,431
30% of Household Income Housing Payment (PITI)	$1,329
Affordability Gap	$123

Source: Terra Nova Planning & Research

The 1995 median income calculated for Riverside County for a family of four is $42,300. This is used to calculate very low (50% of median) and low (80% of median) incomes for use in State and federal subsidized housing programs.

Table III-24
1995 County of Riverside Housing Program Income Limits

	One Person Family	Two Person Family	Three Person Family	Four Person Family
Very Low Income	$14,800	$16,900	$19,050	$21,150
Low Income	23,700	27,050	30,450	33,850

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1995

Rehabilitation Needs

The age of housing is an important characteristic of the stock, indicating its relative condition. An average quality structure has a life of twenty to thirty years. At that time the need for maintenance and rehabilitation becomes critical if the housing is to remain safe and sanitary.

According to the 1990 Census, 2,109 dwelling units were built before 1970 and are now over 25 years old. Approximately 949 of those units are over 30 years old.

This data has been updated by windshield surveys of single family neighborhoods and a unit-by-unit survey of each mobilehome park in the City completed in 1993. Areas surveyed were:

- Peterson and 39th
- San Jacinto Road
- East Veldt and West Veldt loops
- Magnesia Falls area
- Thunder Road
- Tierra del Sol neighborhood

A total of 131 single family units and 140 multi-family units were included in this survey. Of the units surveyed, 23 single family units and 9 multi-family buildings consisting of a total of 24 units needed minor rehabilitation and repairs such as exterior painting. Five single family units and one duplex needed substantial rehabilitation such as roof replacement, structural repair, and electrical and plumbing work. No units surveyed required complete replacement.

Mobilehome Park Survey Results

Every mobilehome in each of the six mobilehome parks in Rancho Mirage was surveyed as to exterior condition in both 1992 and 1994. The results of the surveys are shown in Table III-25 and III-26, below. Table III-27 represents a windshield survey performed in 1992 for the last Housing Element Update. Table III-26 is a compilation of data collected for the City's Redevelopment Agency to assess the level of repair, and costs associated with such repair. It should be noted that the costs associated with the repairs are relatively low in most cases. No units in either survey required complete replacement.

Table III-25
Mobilehome Park Condition Survey Results-1992

	Blue Heaven	Blue Skies	Rancho Mirage	Rancho Palms	Fred A. Johns	The Colony	Total
Total Units	51	143	274	126	67	220	881
Foundation Needed	0	0	0	0	11	0	11
Doors/Windows Broken	2	0	2	0	2	0	6
Roof Repair / Replacement	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Siding Repair	17	8	48	23	13	0	109
Paint Needed	11	34	18	19	13	36	131
Total Units Needing Repair	**30**	**42**	**69**	**43**	**40**	**36**	**260**
Percentage of Units in Need of Repair	59%	29%	25%	34%	60%	16%	29%

Source: American Development Consultants

Table III-26
Mobilehome Park Structural Condition of Coaches, 1994

	Blue Heaven	Rancho Mirage	Rancho Palms	Fred A. Johns	The Colony
No Repairs	9	24	31	0	133
Minor Repairs	13	18	31	9	17
Code Issues	2	9	20	11	0
Significant Repairs	21	150	45	29	55
Major Repairs	7	77	29	18	15
Major Repairs w/health & safety implications	1	2	0	0	0
Total cost to Rehabilitate (not including Code Issues)	$15,900	$65,800	$13,365	$8,325	$9,600

Source: American Development Consultants, Mobilehome Park Study, August, 1994.

The survey did not assess interior condition of the units, including potential plumbing or electrical deficiencies. Units which appear to meet standard exterior conditions may be substandard in other ways, and units appearing to need only exterior painting may require more substantial interior repairs. Survey results establish a minimum number of Mobile homes needing repair and rehabilitation, but not a maximum.

It is clear from the survey that a significant number of Mobile homes in the City are older units in need of some repair to be considered fully standard dwelling units. In 1994, the City of Rancho Mirage purchased the Blue Heaven Mobilehome Park, and has invested $850,000 to make infrastructure improvements in the park.

For individual homeowners, the Home Improvement Program is available for home repair for households which qualify as very low through moderate income. The program was funded for a total of $250,000 in fiscal 1995-1996, and had assisted a total of 34 households during the first half of the fiscal year.

Meeting the 1989-1994 (1998) Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The last available Regional Housing Needs Assessment was prepared by SCAG in 1989. Although now outdated, no new Needs Assessment has been prepared, and the City is still working to meet the previous Needs Assessment. The following Table lists the 1989-1994 allocation for the City of Rancho Mirage.

Table III-27A
Future Housing Needs by Income Category
1989-1994

	Number of Units
Very Low Income	112
Low Income	118
Moderate Income	93
High Income	355
Total	**678**

Units have been built, or are currently planned to fill the City's housing needs in all income categories, since the beginning of the 1989-1994 (1998) planning period (please also see below, Strategy for Meeting Affordable Housing Need, which describes the projects planned in the immediate future). The following Table illustrates new units built or planned by income category. The Table further illustrates the number of moderate and high income residences built since the beginning of the planning period.

Table III-27B
New Housing Units by Income Category
1989-1998

Project	Very Low	Low	Mod.	High
Parkview Villas	47	0	35	0
San Jacinto Villas	24	48	0	0
Los Colinas	8	55	26	0
Whispering Waters	10	19	0	0
Single Family Homes	0	0	0	406
Total	**89**	**122**	**61**	**406**

The Table clearly demonstrates that the City has met its need for High income units, has or is planning to meet 79% of its very low income need, all of its low income need, and 66% of its moderate income need. These percentages represent a strong commitment by the City to meet its need for housing in all income levels.

Future Housing Needs

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) estimates future housing needs by income category for each jurisdiction in the Southern California region. In the last several years, however, SCAG has not received the required State funding to produce the housing estimates. In order for Rancho Mirage to have a comprehensive Housing Element update, the City has prepared its own estimates for the planning period, based on the methodology used by SCAG. The Regional Housing Needs Analysis (RHNA) estimates are incorporated into this Housing Element, as required by Government Code Section 65584.

Table III-27C
Future Housing Needs by Income Category, Unadjusted
1996-2001

	Number of Units
Very Low Income	123
Low Income	118
Moderate Income	89
High Income	292
Total	**622**

Source: Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc. Based on SCAG RHNA methodology.

It is clear from the methodology, however, that the estimates have not in the past been adjusted for the large number of second homes in the City. The City has therefore always planned for units which were not "needed" to house the permanent population. Only 56.8%% of the City's housing stock is occupied by permanent residents. Since existing housing units are an integral component of the Needs Analysis methodology, the total need numbers in the City have been incorrect in the past. As part of the update for this element, the methodology was adjusted to reduce the need to only housing units required to accommodate permanent population growth, not tourist or seasonal home population growth. The results of this analysis are represented in Table III-28, below.

Table III-28
Future Housing Needs by Income Category
1996-2001, Adjusted for Permanent Population

	Number of Units
Very Low Income	90
Low Income	87
Moderate Income	65
High Income	214
Total	**456**

Source: Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc. Based on SCAG RHNA methodology, adjusted to reflect permanent population.

The City therefore estimates a total of 456 new housing units will be needed between 1996 and 2001. Of these, 214 are to be affordable to households with incomes in excess of 120% of median, so it is assumed the private market will provide these higher priced units without assistance from the public sector. The remaining 242 units will need assistance from the public sector to be affordable to low to moderate income households.

Strategy for Meeting Affordable Housing Need

The City has, in recent years, become more aggressive in pursuing its need for affordable housing. This effort was led by the formation of the City's Housing Authority, operated through the Redevelopment Agency. Since its formation, the Housing Authority has been pursuing mobilehome park acquisition, joint venture projects with private developers, and the management of City-owned affordable housing projects.

The Redevelopment Agency had $2,553,948 in Housing Set-Aside funds in fiscal 1995-1996. This amount is down from the previous year by 10%, due to re-assessment by the Riverside County Assessor's office in 1995, caused by the recessionary economy.

In the 1996 through 2001 planning period, the City has committed to the continued expansion of its affordable housing stock through budgetary commitment of its Redevelopment Housing set-aside funds. The following discussion specifically describes current Housing Authority plans, and how they will assist in the development of affordable housing projects in the City. For purposes of this analysis, and to provide the most conservative forecasts, it has been assumed that the Housing Set-Aside funds will continue to provide the Housing Authority with an annual revenue of $2,600,000 through all five years of the planning period.

Whispering Waters Project: Budgeted for the 1996-97 fiscal year, this project received $1.5 million dollars in assistance to rehabilitate a long vacant and dilapidated hotel property. The project recently opened and provides 10 very low and 19 low income housing units for seniors.

San Jacinto Villas Project: Currently under review, the project would provide 24 very low and 48 low income housing units for seniors. The development is projected to use a combination of Tax Credit Allocation Bond financing and Set-Aside funds.

Las Colinas Project: Also currently under review, this project proposes the development of 89 senior housing units, of which 8 will be very low, 55 will be low and 26 will be moderate income units.

Whitewater Senior Project: Planned for Agency-owned land, this project would consist of 36 senior housing units, affordable to very low and low income households. The project is planned for development by a private party, to be owned and managed by the Housing Authority.

Monterey Village Project: Planned for construction by the year 2000, this project, on City-owned property, will include 92 single family ownership units, and 42 single family rental units, affordable to low and moderate income households. The Housing Authority has committed funds for the preparation of financial reports for this project in 1996-97, and plans to commit funds for the extension of infrastructure in 1997-98 and 1998-99 for this project.

All together, these projects represent a total of 360 units to be constructed in the current planning period. With an anticipated need of 242 housing units in the very low, low and moderate income categories for the period from 1996 through 2001, the City will exceed its fair share during this time.

Necessary Commitment of Funds

Based on the County median income calculations for a family of four, a low income household in the City can pay up to $846 per month for housing. This represents

a purchase price, or unit cost of approximately $125,000. For a very low income household, the monthly housing cost cannot exceed $529 per month, or an equivalent purchase or unit cost of $78,200.

The cost of building a home in the City breaks down as follows:

7,500 square foot lot	$ 56,250.00
1,700 s.f. House	$ 93,500.00
Total Cost	**$149,750.00**

Based on these estimates, the difference between the cost of a home and what a low income household can afford in the City is $24,750, while the difference for a very low income household is $71,550. If the City were to subsidize all of the very low and low income household needs during the five year planning period, therefore, a total of $6,439,500 would be required for very low income households, and a total of $2,153,250 would be required for low income households, for a total of $8,592,750.

With an estimated revenue of $13,000,000 in Housing Set-Aside funds during the planning period, of which approximately $3,010,000 will be required to operate the Housing Authority (salaries, benefits, supplies, Home Improvement Program, etc.), the City will have $9,990,000 available for direct assistance of very low and low income households. Therefore, the revenue available to the City exceeds the costs associated with subsidizing all of the very low and low income housing units required to meet the City's need.

Quantified Objectives

The rate of demolition in the City has historically been fewer than 5 units per year. The City's population is expected to steadily grow during the planning period, resulting in an expected need primarily in new housing, rather than in preservation or rehabilitation.

The City's total housing need for the period from 1996 through 2001 is 456 units, of which 214 are in the high income category. The need for this category is expected to be filled by new construction by private development interests.

The following Table demonstrates the expected needs, by income category, for the period from 1996 to 2001.

Table III-29
Quantified Objectives Matrix
1996-2001

Income Category	Very Low	Low	Mod.	High	Total
New Construction	70	52	45	214	381
Rehab.	10	25	20	0	55
Conservation	10	10	0	0	20

Affordable Units at Risk

Many of the programs used throughout the Coachella Valley during the past twenty-five years to subsidize rental and ownership housing included time limits on affordability restrictions. Federal mortgage revenue bond regulations also have limitations on the number of years affordability restrictions remain in effect.

Recently, the earliest of these affordability restrictions have begun to expire. This problem, which may result from an early pay-off of project financing or an "opting out" of Section 8 contracts, can have significant impacts on the communities in which these projects are located. For rental projects, the elimination of rent level restrictions has recently become particularly attractive to building owners as a result of several independent factors. The original owners of many affordable projects invested because of rapid depreciation, which created extraordinary tax shelter benefits. Many of those benefits have expired. Additionally, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 altered the federal tax structure for residential income property.

Many projects were re-syndicated after 1981 to take advantage of changes in the tax structure at that time. Many of these re-syndications were accomplished through short-term financing with second mortgages. Pressures from rapid growth, and the desirability of the Coachella Valley, compound the problem by increasing the demand and rental prices for market rate rental units.

The California Coalition for Rural Housing described the ideal candidate for conversion or opting out as having the following characteristics:

- The project would be located in a suburban or rapidly urbanizing rural area.
- It would be in good physical condition and in a good location to command a market rent.
- The market area would be characterized by high growth, escalating housing costs, and low vacancy rates.
- The project would have rent levels lower than the prevailing rents for comparable units.
- The current owner would have a deferred second loan that is coming due, or have experienced tax shelter burnout either as a result of having accelerated the loss, or having lost the shelter through the imposition of tax reform.

In Rancho Mirage, the existing Villa Mirage project consists of 98 units of subsidized rental housing. The project was built in two phases, 50 and 48 units respectively, in 1985. The financing, arranged through the California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA), is subsidized through project-based Section 8 certificates. Forty eight of the certificates were issued for 30 years and will expire in the year 2015. The remaining 50 certificates were issued for a period of only 20 years and will expire in the year 2005. However, at the time of financing an annuity through the Department of Housing and Community Development Rental Housing Construction Program was put into place to provide subsidy for an additional 10 years. Therefore, neither component of the Villa Mirage project is at risk before the year 2015.

Rancho Mirage Resort, built in 1984, is an ownership project targeted toward moderate income households. The project consists of a total of 189 units (160 townhouses and 29 detached homes). Units are 2 and 3 bedrooms, ranging from 840 sq. ft. to 1,200 sq. ft. The City, through its Redevelopment Agency, assisted the project by funding fees, off-site improvements, and upgraded landscaping.

Affordability is preserved through resale restrictions limiting future prices to base price paid plus changes in the Consumer Price Index and actual improvements made to the units. The majority of the project, 147 units, were limited for a period of five years to eliminate short term speculation and encourage owner-occupied units. These units are no longer subject to resale price restrictions, and may, if there is sufficient inflation in the real estate market, no longer be affordable to moderate income families. The remaining 42 units are bound by resale restrictions and will remain affordable for 30 years after the date of the initial sales, or through the year 2014.

The City of Rancho Mirage does not currently have any projects assisted through the HUD Section 101, 213, 236, 221D(3), 202, or multi-family revenue bond programs, as listed in the Inventory of Federally Subsidized Rental Units At Risk of Conversion, 1990. The City has not used CDBG funds for multifamily rental units. Redevelopment funds have been used for multifamily projects, as noted above, and all conditioned with a recorded regulatory agreement requiring a minimum of 20 years as affordable units. Density Bonus projects are similarly conditioned. The City has not been located in a qualifying rural FmHA area and has not had an in-lieu fee program.

Although the City has no units at risk of conversion within the next 20 years, policies need to be established to ensure all new projects with an affordable component maintain their affordability for the longest feasible time.

Preservation of Mobilehome Parks as an Affordable Housing Opportunity

It has been estimated that a total of 1,243 households in the City are defined as Very Low or Low income in the City. The Rancho Mirage Mobilehome Park Study (American Development Consultants, 1994) found that the there were 582 very low and low income households within these parks, or 46.8% of the City's very low and low income households. The long term preservation of these mobilehome parks, therefore, will have a direct positive impact on the City's lower income residents.

SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

Within the identified existing and future needs, there are households with identifiable special needs, as defined by the state. These groups include single parent households, farm workers, the handicapped and the elderly. Each special needs category is discussed in greater detail below.

Farm workers

Farm worker housing is not an issue in the City of Rancho Mirage. The economy in the upper Coachella Valley has not been agriculturally based in several decades. There is therefore no need for Farm worker housing in the City.

Homeless

Homelessness is a difficult issue to quantify. The homeless are generally mobile, often crossing from one city or county into another. The mild winter climate in the Coachella Valley may attract the homeless in those months. Hot summer temperatures encourage the homeless to seek daytime shelter in air conditioned public places such as libraries, malls, and other public buildings.

The primary provider of services to the homeless in the Coachella Valley is Catholic Charities, a non-profit, nondenominational organization. Catholic Charities staff reports that the reasons for homelessness include sudden job loss, illness and lack of medical insurance, family break-ups, and seasonal job lay-offs or reduction in hours.

Catholic Charities and the County Housing Authority operate Nightengale Manor, a 14 unit emergency shelter for homeless families. The shelter is located in Palm Springs, but serves the entire Coachella Valley region.

Nightingale Manor shelters approximately two hundred families per year. A minimal number of the families sheltered at Nightingale Manor report Rancho Mirage as prior residence. Other transient homeless stay in Rancho Mirage public parks, under bridges, and in vacant properties. Actual numbers of homeless fluctuate seasonally.

Other groups of homeless individuals not served by the facility at Nightingale Manor include the mentally ill, those with chemical dependencies, and those who voluntarily choose a transient lifestyle. These individuals may be served by the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, located in Indio, or by the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, located at the National Guard Armory in Indio, in the winter months. These facilities provide only emergency shelter and do not deal with the causes of homelessness. Facilities which provide recovery services as well as shelter are limited and include the ABC Club and Lost Heads Ranch. Both generally have waiting lists and are located outside the City.

The Riverside County Sheriff's office picks up two to three transients a year in the City of Rancho Mirage, primarily during the winter months. Transients are generally asked to leave the property they are using as temporary shelter and move on.

The Elderly

Rancho Mirage has a very large senior citizen population. In 1990, 56% of the City's population was age 55 or over, and 49% was age 60 or over. Demographic characteristics of the elderly from the 1990 Census are shown in Table III-30.

Table III-30
Demographic Characteristics of the Elderly-1980
(Age 65 and Over)

Population Age 65 & Older	Number 3,706	Percent of the Total 38%	Population
Elderly Residing in:			
Group Quarters	129	3.5%	of Elderly Population
Living Alone	750	20%	of Elderly Population
Female Living Alone	559	15%	of Elderly Population
Male Living Alone	191	5%	of Elderly Population
Living with Family	2,674	72%	of Elderly Population
Living in Owner Occupied Units	2,094	57%	of Elderly Population

Source: 1990 Census

It is anticipated that the aging of the "baby boomer" generation will result in continued growth of the senior and elderly population.

The 1990 Census indicates 2,387 households in Rancho Mirage receive Social Security. The mean income for these households is $10,459, well below the definition of very low income. Census data also show 1,032 households receive retirement income. The mean income of these households is $15,345.

Affordability can be an issue of special concern to the elderly, who are often on fixed retirement incomes. In addition, the elderly may require assistance with housekeeping, maintenance, and repairs to remain in their own homes as long as possible. Special design features that may be needed include elimination of barriers such as steps and the provision of recreational and social amenities for the elderly.

The City of Rancho Mirage owns and operates Parkview Villas, an 82 unit seniors-only apartment complex. Within the project, 57% of residents are either very low or low income households.

As the elderly become less independent and require more constant care, a continuum of housing options becomes important, ranging from independent unassisted living, to congregate or board and care facilities which provide meals, maid service, and social opportunities, to nursing care facilities which provide complete medical care. In addition to the services available at Eisenhower Medical Center, the Rancho Mirage Healthcare Center, located on Country Club Drive, provides a full service nursing care facility. Additional convalescent care facilities are located in Palm Desert, Palm Springs and Indio.

Handicapped

The 1990 Census identified 1,134 persons in the City with disabilities, of which 677 were 65 years of age or older. This relatively high number of disabled households is due to the high percentage of senior households in the City. No data is available regarding how many households are disabled households in the City.

No data is currently available which correlates disability to income, and not all disabling conditions impact an individual's income or housing needs. Many disabilities, however, lead to special housing needs such as ramps, wider doors and hallways, lower cabinets and countertops, and grab bars.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that all new multi-family construction include a percentage of units accessible to the handicapped. The City of Rancho Mirage Building Department monitors and requires compliance with these standards as part of the Building Permit review, issuance, and inspection process.

AIDS

The Desert AIDS Project (DAP) reports that as of May, 1996, 52 clients of the DAP reside in the City of Rancho Mirage. Although other residents may be HIV-positive, most DAP clients have progressed into the symptomatic stages of the disease. As the disease progresses, persons with AIDS (PWA's) often become unable to work, lose their source of income, and lose their medical insurance. Housing affordable to low income people, including group homes and hospice care, become special housing needs of PWA's.

Table III-31
Demographic Characteristics of the Desert Aids Project Clients
1996

	Number	% of Total Clientele Residing in Rancho Mirage
Total Residing in Rancho Mirage	52	
Women, minority	4	8%
Senior citizens (65 & over)	2	4%
Physically handi-capped	5	10%
Single-headed households with children	40	77%
Housebound	4	8%
Unemployed or underemployed	35	67%
Low income households	34	65%

Source: Desert Aids Project, 1996.

Large Families

The 1990 Census indicates there are 134 households in Rancho Mirage with five or more members. The Census also shows that there were 822 housing units in the City with four or more bedrooms, 180 of which had 5 or more bedrooms. Large families have a special need for three, four, or more bedroom units. No data is available regarding the relationship of these larger units to affordability.

Single Parent Families and Female Headed Households

1990 Census data indicates there are 183 single parent families in Rancho Mirage, 29 with a male head of household and 154 with a female head of household. The Census further estimates that 24 of these female-headed families have incomes below poverty level.

Single individuals with dependent children need housing which is both affordable and located close to day care facilities and schools.

Female headed households are predominantly a low income group. Compared to other households, this group:

- has low incomes and high poverty rates
- pay high percentages of income for housing
- has a low home ownership rate
- has high rates of overcrowding
- is younger

The 1990 Census indicates there are 106 children under 18 years of age in Rancho Mirage living in families whose incomes are below the national poverty level. Of these, 38 live in female headed households.

Primary housing needs include affordability and units of sufficient size.

First Time Homebuyers

First time home buyers are often limited by a lack of funds for the necessary down payment and closing costs. The 1995 median value of a home in Rancho Mirage was $218,750. A twenty percent down payment is $43,750, beyond the reach of many working first time home buyers. Less expensive homes in the $100,000 to $125,000 range, more affordable to new homeowners, could require a down payment of $20,000 to $25,000 for conventional financing. Financing allowing smaller down payments (90% to 95% financing) or assistance in making down payments can be important contributions for first time home buyers.

Rental Rates

The median monthly rental rate for Rancho Mirage was $620. Based on the 30% gross household income standard, a monthly income of $2,066, or annual rate of $24,792, is needed to afford a rent of $620 per month.

Table III-32
Representative Apartment
Market Rates in Rancho Mirage, 1995

Project Name or Address (total units)	Unit Type	Rental Rate
Desert Braemar (100)	1 & 2 Bdrm	$350-420
Villa Mirage *(98)	2 & 3 Bdrm	$834-937
70-200 Thunder Rd. (4)	2 Bdrm	$550
39-905 Bird Lane (15)	2 Bdrm	$600-650
39-881 Bird Lane (8)	2 & 3 Bdrm	$325-650

*Units are subsidized through CHAFA, HUD or other programs.

The rental rates described above show a variety of apartment sizes available at a range of rental rates.

In addition, as discussed above, the City's mobilehome parks provide a significant affordable housing opportunity, housing 582, or 46.8% of the City's very low and low income households.

Energy Conservation

The hot summer climate in Rancho Mirage and the need for cooling makes energy conservation parti-cularly important. Title 24 and Building Code regulations require energy efficiency in all new construction of housing through design features, insulation, and active solar devices.

An unfortunate side effect of requiring energy efficient new construction is an increase in the cost of construction of new housing. When evaluating energy efficiency standards above and beyond the State-mandated Title 24, local jurisdictions must balance the increase in the cost of housing with the reduction in monthly utility bills for the user.

Land use patterns also impact energy conservation. Infill and concentrated land use patterns minimize travel time and distance to work and shopping destinations. Mass transit is most efficient when traveling major corridors that link population centers and employment centers. More rural land use patterns discourage mass transit and alternative modes of transportation such as buses in favor of automobiles, contributing to energy consumption.

The City's development regulations, building regulations and General Plan enforce the standards required in Title 24, as well as providing encouragement for the use of energy efficient construction techniques. In addition, the City's Redevelopment Agency and Housing Authority encourage energy efficiency in their own projects. As an example, after acquiring the Parkview Villas complex to preserve its affordability, the Redevelopment Agency installed a solar water heating system as an energy conservation measure.

CONSTRAINTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING

The supply of housing for households of all income levels is affected by a variety of constraints, some governmental and some non-governmental. These factors may affect the number of units built, the size and suitability of the unit, and the price of the unit. Some constraints are beyond the control of local governments, but others may be reduced or eliminated at the discretion of the local government.

Governmental Constraints

During the past decade, the federal government has significantly reduced funding for affordable housing programs. Since the demand for affordable housing has increased during this same period, as a result of overall population growth, the burden for providing affordable housing has been shifted to local governments without the addition of new resources. Local governments are often in the position of allocating scarce resources in an attempt to meet seemingly unlimited needs.

Local governments impose a variety of codes and regulations which affect the affordability of housing.

Land Use Controls

Every city must have a General Plan which establishes policy guidelines for all development within the City. The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates specific areas for different types of development and establishes density ranges for residential development. Zoning, which must be consistent with the General Plan, establishes more specific development standards, allowable uses, and limitations.

The City of Rancho Mirage General Plan establishes the categories and densities for residential development as shown in Table III-33.

Land Availability

Table III-34 shows the currently available residentially designated land in the City, and maximum unit buildout.

Table III-33
Residential Land Use Categories

Designation	Maximum Density	Purpose
R-L Low Density	2 du/ac	Attached and Detached Single Family Development, Country Club Development, Residential Estates
R-L-3 Low Density	3 du/ac	Single Family Subdivisions, Planned Residential Developments using transfers in density to provide common open space.
R-M Medium Density	5 du/ac	Single Family Subdivisions, Multi-family Developments, Planned Developments, Mobilehome Parks, Affordable Housing.
R-H High Density	9 du/ac	Single and Multi-Family Planned Developments, Apartments, Mobilehome Parks, Affordable Housing.
MHP Mobilehome Park	9du/ac	Preservation of Existing Mobilehome Parks.
HR Hillside Reserve	1 du/640 ac	Areas of Steep Slope, Sensitive Habitats.
MU Mixed Use	Varies	Combined Residential and Commercial Development, Specific Plan Required.

Source: City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Land Use Element, 1996

Table III-34
Vacant Acreage Residential Buildout - 1995

Designation	Maximum Density	Vacant Acres	Dwellings Units	Population per Unit	Maximum Additional Population
R-L, Low Density (Single Family)	2 du/ac	1,156	2,312	2.05	4,740
R-L-3, Low Density Single Family)	3 du/ac	298	894	2.05	1,833
R-M, Medium Density Single or Multi-Family)	5 du/ac	629	3,145	2.05	6,447
R-H, High Density (Multi-Family)	9 du/ac	212	1,908	2.05	3,911
MHP, Mobile Home Park	9 du/ac	0	0	0	0
MU, Mixed Use	6.5 du/ac	48	312	2.05	640
HR, Hillside Reserve	1 du/640 ac	4,389	7	2.05	14
Total		**6,732**	**8,578**		**17,585**

The City has estimated the five year need for housing affordable to all income ranges for the period 1996 to 2001 to be 456 units. Sufficient vacant acreage is available to provide this number of units. There is also sufficient range of allowable densities in the vacant acreage to allow for the development of housing in a variety of types (single family, multi-family) and costs.

The City has designated two Redevelopment Project Areas, which together comprise the majority of the City. Few sites are suitable for redevelopment into residential use, however. The majority of the project areas are already residential. Commercially zoned property is primarily located along Highway 111 in areas not well suited for residential development. Mixed use areas which could include a residential component are included in Table III-34 above.

In addition to the vacant acreage quantified in Table III-34, a number of infill parcels are scattered throughout developed areas of the City. No data is available on the number of these parcels, but they provide an additional land resource for future housing development. At this time, the General Plan is not, in itself, a constraint.

Density

The City has an established pattern and character of development of high design standards and low densities. It is the established policy of the City to maintain this community character for all new development, including affordable housing projects.

Maintaining low densities increases the cost of construction per unit. Clearly, if affordability to very low and low income households is to be achieved, increased levels of subsidy will be required. The City of Rancho Mirage is in the unique position of being able to meet these requirements through the Redevelopment Agency's Low and Moderate Income Housing Set-Aside Fund.

The Set-Aside Fund receives an annual cash flow of tax increment funds of an estimated $2.6 million per year (1995-96). In 1995-96, the Set-aside Fund balance is $8.4 million. The City, through its Housing Authority, has budgeted $3.05 million specifically to assist in the construction or preservation of affordable housing projects. The allocated funds are shown in Table III-35, below.

Table III-35
1995-96 Set-aside Fund Expenditures for Affordable Housing Projects

Project	Amount
Mobilehome Park Fire Suppression	$100,000
Blue Heaven Mobilehome Park	$850,000
Las Colinas Project	$1,250,000
Whispering Waters Project	$200,000
San Jacinto Project	$500,000
Monterey & Dinah Shore Project	$150,000
Total	**$3,050,000**

Source: Redevelopment Agency Budget, 1995-96.

The Blue Heaven Mobilehome Park was purchased by the City in 1994 in order to assure its preservation. The City has, in addition to the purchase of the Park, expended considerable sums in improving infrastructure, including water lines and fire suppression systems.

The City is considering allocating additional Housing Set-Aside funds to the Whispering Waters and Las Colinas projects, which would provide affordable senior housing within the City.

The Monterey Village project is a portion of a large City-owned holding in the northern portion of the City. In 1995-96, the City expended funds in the preparation of a development plan for 20 acres to be devoted to affordable housing development.

These improvement projects, as well as the other expenses incurred by the Housing Authority in 1995-96, will result in an unallocated fund balance of $4.6 million at the end of the City's fiscal year.

This combined with the annual tax increment in 1996-97 will result in a level of funding which would allow the Agency to subsidize the construction of its full RHNA very low, low, and moderate income needs (242

units) at over $28,000 per unit, even when operating expenses are deducted.

In combination with other tools available to the City such as tax exempt financing and density bonuses, this resource will be sufficient to meet the City's housing needs while maintaining the community's high quality low density character.

Zoning Constraints

The City's Zoning Ordinance establishes the specific uses allowed or prohibited for each land use designation, and specific development standards such as required parking and setbacks.

The Residential Zone portions of the ordinance impact housing affordability in several ways.

The City's Zoning Ordinance allows for density bonuses in excess of the state-mandated 25% over the allowable density in exchange for the dedication of a portion of the project as affordable. This provision is designed to mitigate the constraint to affordability imposed by lower density designations. The density bonus provisions are outlined in Table III-36, below.

Other provisions in the Zoning Ordinance impact the cost of housing in the City. Minimum development standards, including dwelling unit sizes and parking requirements, shown in Tables III-37 and III-38, add to the cost of the finished home.

Table III-36
Maximum Allowable Density Bonus for Affordable Housing Projects

Bonus Amount (% increase over base zoning)	Applicable Base Base Zoning Designations	Minimum Affordability Affordability Requirement
25%	All residential zones.	25% to low income.
33%	High Density Residential	20% to very low income; or 30% to lower; or 40% to low or moderate.
50%	Low and Medium Density Residential	20% to very low income; or 30% to lower; or 40% to low or moderate.

Table III-37
Residential Development Standards
Minimum Area Requirements for Residential Zones

Zones/Uses	Livable Area in Sq. Ft.	Bedroom Max. Number	Baths Min. Number	Parking Required
Single Family Detached	1,400	2	1 1/2	2 spaces in garage
	1,700	3 or 2 + den	1 3/4	
	1,900	4	2	
Condominium, Planned Unit Development	850	1	1	2 spaces in garage and one guest space per unit.
	1,250	2	1 3/4	
	1,650	3	2	
Apartments	600	1	1	1 covered/ 1 uncovered.
	800	2	1 1/2	2 covered/ 1 uncovered.
	1,000	3	1 3/4	2 covered/ 1 uncovered
	1,200	3+	2	2 covered/ 1 uncovered.
Senior Group Housing	410	Studio	1	1 covered/ 1 uncovered.
	510-570	1	1	1 covered/ 1 uncovered.
	610-670	2	2	1 covered/ 1 uncovered.

Source: City of Rancho Mirage

Table III-38
Minimum Development Standards for Residential Zones

	R-1 Single Family Residential	R-E Rural Equestrian	PUD-L Planned Unit Dev Low Density	PUD-M Planned Unit Dev Medium Density	PUD-H Planned Unit Dev High Density	MHP-Mobile Home Park
Standard Maximum Units per Acre	4	1	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Lot Area	10,000 sq.ft.	1 ac	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Lot Width	70	100	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Lot Depth	100	100	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Front Setback	25	25	25(a)	25(a)	25(a)	10
Rear Setback	25	25	25(a)	25(a)	25(a)	10
Side Setback	10	10	10(a)	10(a)	10(a)	5
Building Lot Coverage	25%	30%	30%(b)	30%(b)	30%(b)	30%(b)
Distance Between Buildings	-	-	20	20	20	10
Private Outdoor Living Space	-	-	1,000	500	300	300
Main Building Height	All zones: Twenty (20) feet or one (1) story, whichever is less, unless additional height criteria are satisfied.					

(a) These dimensions vary in Planned Unit Development, Mixed Use and Mobilehome Parks, and will be determined during Development Plan review.
(b) Gross area of total project area for Planned Unit Developments and Mobilehome Parks.

Source: City of Rancho Mirage

The Zoning Ordinance also establishes minimum room sizes for all residential zones. These are shown in Table III-39.

Table III-39
Minimum Room Size

Minimum Area (s.f.)	
Garage	400
Bedroom	140
Full bath	50
Three-quarter bath	40
Half bath	30

Source: City of Rancho Mirage

For affordable housing projects, the City has developed less restrictive standards, as shown in Table III-40.

Table III-40
Minimum Area Requirements for Affordable Housing Projects

Use	Livable Area in Sq. Ft.	Bedroom Maximum Number	Baths Minimum Number
Single Family Detached	1,200	2	1 ½
	1,500	3 or 2+den	1 3/4
	1,700	4	2
Condominium, Planned Unit Development	850	1	1
	1,200	2	1 3/4
	1,500	3	2
Apartments	600	1	1
	800	2	1 ½
	1,000	3	1 3/4
	1,200	3+	2
Senior Group Housing	410	Studio	1
	510-570	1	1
	610-670	2	2

Source: American Development Consultants

Design standards such as roofing materials, architectural enhancements, and landscaping also increase the costs of housing. The City's established policy is that, with the exception of density bonuses, minimum unit areas and reduced parking for senior housing, affordable housing projects should meet the same design standards as other residential developments. As a result, additional subsidy may be required.

Projects including new residential construction are normally required to install all necessary on- and off-site improvements, including streets, curbs, sidewalks, and water and sewer connections. Infrastructure improvements may be in place at infill lots.

Typical infrastructure requirements in Rancho Mirage include:

- Local streets: 60' right of way, 40' wide street.
- Restricted local street: 50' right of way; 36' wide street.
- Secondary street: 88' right of way; 64' wide street.
- Concrete 6" curbing.
- Connection to the nearest water and sewer mains.

Actual requirements vary according to each specific site. The requirements for each project, in accordance with the City's General Plan, are intended to connect the project site with the City's existing infrastructure and provide for the needs of the project's residents.

The requirements to install infrastructure impact the cost of housing projects. However, the projects themselves need the infrastructure improvements. In those instances where the infrastructure costs, in combination with other costs of construction, create economic infeasibility, the City may choose to subsidize the infrastructure improvements through the Redevelopment Agency or Housing Authority.

Building Code Requirements

The City has adopted and enforces the Uniform Building Code (UBC) to ensure all housing units are constructed to be safe for the occupants. The UBC was developed by the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) and adopted by the State of California. The City cannot adopt standards that are less stringent than the UBC, which is used throughout California. Imposition of the UBC does not unduly impact the cost of housing in

Rancho Mirage in comparison to any other community in the State.

Fees

Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and the resulting reduction in tax revenues, California cities have sought new. ways to generate revenues. In many instances, cities have imposed new fees or increased existing fees to cover the costs of providing services to new development. School districts also charge a fee of $1.84 per square foot of residential construction to offset the costs of providing new schools.

Estimated fees for residential development in Rancho Mirage are shown in Table III-41. Additional fees may be charged for review of planning applications such as tract maps or planned development permits, architectural review, and environmental review. Both TUMF fees and license tax for new construction provide exemptions for affordable housing projects.

It is clear fees raise the ultimate cost of housing to the consumer. However, cities generally have no other options for recouping the costs of providing necessary services to residents. Instead, cities may increase needed subsidy to achieve affordability.

Table III-41
Development Fees - City of Rancho Mirage - 1996

	Single Family		Multi-Family
	1800 sq. ft.	**2500 sq. ft.**	**Twenty Units; 2 bedrooms/800 sq. ft.**
Estimated Construction Valuation[1]	$115,030	$168,825	$ 1,068,000
Fees:			
• Building	$ 695.50	$ 881.00	$ 183.78/unit
• Plan Check	$ 452.08	$ 572.65	$ 119.45/unit
• Mech., Elect., Plumbing	$ 315.00	$ 350.00	$ 185.50/unit
• License Tax[2]	$2,376.00	$3,300.00	$1,056.00/unit
Subtotal	$3,838.58	$5,103.65	$1,544.73/unit
Non City Fees:			
• SMIP	$ 11.50	$ 16.88	$5.34/unit
• TUMF[2]	838.30	838.30	$506.30/unit
• School Fee	2,576.00	3,864.00	$1,472.00/unit
Subtotal	$3,425.80	$4,719.18	$1,983.64/unit
TOTAL	**$7,264.38**	**$9,822.83**	**$3,528.37/unit**

[1] Based on $76.85/sq.ft. living area, $18.60/sq.ft. garage,

[2] Fee waived for affordable housing projects

Source: City of Rancho Mirage

Permit Processing Procedures

The City of Rancho Mirage processes permits for all housing projects, including:

Market Rate and Affordable Housing Projects: Condominiums, apartments, single family tract home proposals, whether affordable or market rate, are subject to the Development Plan Permit (DPP) process, requiring staff, Architectural Review Board (ARB), and Planning Commission review and approval. The Architectural Review Board has been established to ensure that the development standards required in the Zoning Ordinance, include unit size, density and parking, are met in each development proposal. The DPP consists of two applications: the Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) and the Final Development Plan (FDP).

Preliminary Development Plan. To commence the process, the applicant first submits to the Planning Division the PDP application, which includes several plans and public hearing materials (see application form for complete requirements).

- Staff reviews the application and notes any corrections in a letter to the applicant within thirty (30) days of submittal. Project plans are routed to various public agencies (e.g., Fire Marshal, Coachella Valley Water District, etc.) and the City Engineer for their comments.

- When all corrections are made by the applicant and the application is deemed "complete", the proposal is scheduled for review by the ARB. The ARB is an advisory board, commenting on architecture, landscaping, and site design. They may recommend forwarding the proposal to the Planning Commission or returning it to the applicant for corrections and additional ARB review. Most applicants willingly agree, and make the recommended ARB changes.

- Upon completed ARB review, the proposal is scheduled for a public hearing before the Planning Commission. A staff report is prepared, including conditions of approval and an environmental assessment. The Commission may continue, deny or approve the application.

Processing time for most PDPs, from submittal to City Council action, averages two to three months. The amount of time may vary depending on the applicant's response time for corrections or other items requested by the City. An approved PDP is valid for one year. Within that time, an FDP application, described below, must be submitted and approved. The applicant may request one year extension of the original approval. The extension request by the applicant requires submittal of a letter explaining the need for the extension as well as a fee. Both must be submitted thirty (30) days prior to the expiration date of the PDP. Extension requests are subject to Planning Commission review and City Council approval, and require one to two months to process.

The above description assumes the adoption of a Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact by the Planning Commission. The environmental review, required by State law, is considered concurrently with the PDP. An Environmental Impact Report would add several months to the process.

Final Development Plan. The FDP application, submitted to the Planning Division, consists of the project's construction plans prepared in accordance with the approved PDP application and its Conditions of Approval. As long as the project substantially conforms with that approved by the City Council, the FDP is approved by Planning Division staff. The FDP is the "title" given only to Planning Division construction plan submittal. Obviously, submittals are also required to the City's Building and Engineering Divisions. Each division reviews the proposal and informs the applicant of any corrections. Conformance checks between the three divisions are done to ensure plan consistency. The FDP and the Building and Engineering Division submittals must all be approved prior to building permit issuance.

The FDP may be approved within two to four months of submittal. Construction of the project must begin within one year of the FDP approval, or the approval

expires. The original FDP approval may be extended by the City Council in the manner described for extensions under the PDP discussion.

The applicant may receive FDP approval from the Planning Division prior to receiving approvals from Building and Engineering. In addition, several other agencies review and approve the construction drawings prior to building permit issuance, including water and sewer providers and utility companies. The other agencies' workloads and requirements, as well as the applicant's degree of willingness and readiness to respond to any requirements, makes it difficult to determine the average time between FDP submittal and building permit issuance.

Parcel and Tract Maps. Housing projects may also require the processing of subdivision maps to create the necessary lots and/or site configuration. Whether a parcel map (four or fewer lots), or tract map (five or more lots), the project and environmental review and approval process and time involved are the similar to the PDP application, except that ARB review is not required. The subdivision map may be processed concurrently with the PDP.

Initially, subdivisions are given tentative approval by the Planning Commission, valid for two years. Within that time, a Final Map must be submitted and approved by the City Council as a non-public hearing item. The Final Map application is almost exclusively handled by the Engineering Division. Should the applicant not be able to receive an approved Final Map within the two year initial life, one year extensions, as provided by State law, are possible.

As with the FDP application, time between Tentative and Final Map approval is difficult to determine and is dependent upon the numerous public agencies involved in the Final Map review, as well as the degree of applicant responsiveness.

These processing times are not perceived as excessive by the development community, and in themselves, do not significantly impact housing construction costs.

Article XXXIV

Article XXXIV of the California Constitution requires voter approval of affordable housing developments when they are developed, constructed, or acquired in any manner by a public agency. Rancho Mirage voters considered and passed an Article XXXIV referendum in 1981. The authorization was not for any specific site or project.

Article XXXIV requirements do not apply to projects that are owned by a private developer, owned by a private non-profit organization, or contain less than 50% affordable units.

Economic Constraints

Non-governmental constraints to affordable housing in Rancho Mirage include the cost of land, cost of construction, and cost of financing. These factors are determined on a regional or national basis.

Land Costs

The cost of land is an important component of housing costs. The rapid increase in land costs throughout Southern California has pushed up housing costs simultaneously. Land in the Coachella Valley has been, and remains, relatively affordable compared to other Southern California markets, but increased demand for housing due to population growth and in-migration will continue to put upward pressure on land costs.

A survey of selected realtors listing vacant residential property in Rancho Mirage revealed prices ranging from $6 to $10 per square foot for an improved single family residential lot. Property zoned for low density planned development with all necessary infrastructure was approximately $7 to $7.50 per square foot. Large acreage parcels requiring subdivision and the installation of infrastructure (utilities available nearby) zoned for single family or planned development projects range from $1.15 per square foot to $2.65 per square foot.

These land values are significantly higher than in many other Coachella Valley communities where improved single family lots are available for less than $5 per square foot. Although the City does not determine the price of land, land use policies regulating the number of

units built per acre directly impact the cost of each dwelling unit.

Construction Costs

Construction costs are the result of the current costs of labor, materials, and short-term financing. Single family construction costs are estimated to range between $46 and $60 per square foot depending on home design and materials selected. Multi-family construction costs range from $40 and $60 per square foot, again depending on design. The City cannot directly control construction costs, so increases in these costs directly affect the need for subsidy to achieve affordability in residential units.

Financing Costs

Financing costs impact both the purchase price of the unit and the home buyers ability to purchase. Interest rates fluctuate in response to national factors. Currently relatively low (8% to 9%), they can change significantly and substantially impact the affordability of the housing stock. However, the City may develop and implement programs to write down interest rates in order to increase affordability. There are no known mortgage deficient areas in the City. Financing for both construction and long term mortgages is generally available subject to normal underwriting standards.

Homeowners' Associations

In many condominium, country club, and closed gate communities, homeowners are charged mandatory monthly Homeowners Association dues. Although the initial purchase price of many country club communities exceeds the definitions of affordable to moderate income households, in some projects the initial price of the unit is affordable. However, when the total housing payment (principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) is combined with a substantial monthly Homeowners Association fee, the total payment can exceed 30% of the household's income.

PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS

Maintenance of Housing Stock

Housing stock over 30 years of age begins to deteriorate if not properly maintained. Tenants in rental properties are often unable or unwilling to make extensive repairs and rehabilitation. Owners of older single family units and Mobile homes may also not have sufficient income to make major rehabilitations. Unchecked, this deterioration of portions of the housing stock negatively impacts the supply of affordable housing.

Although the majority of housing in Rancho Mirage is relatively new, 9% of the units in the City are over 30 years of age.

All other areas of the City are not subject to infrastructure constraints. These areas are all fairly small, and have a minimal impact on the dwelling unit buildout estimates included in Table III-9.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Although most of the City's infill development sites are not constrained by the lack of infrastructure, there are a few areas with currently inadequate services.

- Thunder Road area consists of three cul-de-sac streets (Bird, View and Estates Roads) off Thunder Road, is zoned PUD-H (high density residential), and could be an appropriate location for affordable multi-family housing. New development in this area has been halted, however, by inadequate water pressure. The current four inch water line serving the area does not deliver sufficient water pressure to meet fire flow requirements. Therefore, any new development in the area must replace the existing four-inch line with a minimum eight-inch line. This substantial cost has rendered single lot projects in the area economically infeasible.

- Peterson and 39th is an area of one acre and larger equestrian lots without sewer service. The homes are now on septic systems, and some still have individual wells for domestic water supply. As long as the septic systems and wells remain functional, the homeowners will not be required to put in other systems. New homes in the area are being required to put in a dry sewer lateral at the time of construction to allow for eventual hook-up to a system once installed.

- Magnesia Falls area is still on a septic tank system. The City is now evaluating whether to proceed with the installation of sewer lines.

- Vista Dunes and Vista del Sol is an area of one acre lots lacking adequate infrastructure. The property owners are currently working to form an assessment district to install necessary infrastructure and remove this impediment to development.

These areas of infrastructure limitations may be corrected by the installation of needed sewer and water lines. Particularly in the Thunder Road and Magnesia Falls areas, if the City wishes to encourage affordable residential development, this constraint may be addressed through the use of Housing Set-aside Funds.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation was included in every phase of the development of this Housing Element.

The General Plan Advisory Committee held three workshops to discuss the Element and its goals, policies and programs. The Element was also reviewed in public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A variety of housing types that meet a diversity of needs within the City.

GOAL 2

Expanded housing opportunities for all residents of Rancho Mirage.

GOAL 3

Housing to meet the needs of the City's lower income households.

GOAL 4

The preservation and maintenance of the City's affordable housing supply in a safe and sanitary condition.

Policy 1
The General Plan shall provide for a mixture of residential densities dispersed throughout the City.

Program 1.A
The City shall monitor the remaining supply of vacant land in all residential zoning categories.

Program 1.B
The City shall review and revise its residential development standards, as needed, to ensure that a variety of housing types are accommodated without sacrificing the City's design standards.

Policy 2
The City's residential development standards shall allow for a diversity of housing types while adhering to the General Plan's community design policies.

Policy 3
Affordable housing developments shall be distributed throughout the City rather than. concentrated in one area.

Policy 4
The City shall strive to meet the State-mandated special shelter needs of first time home buyers, large families, female headed households, single parent families, workers employed in Rancho Mirage, senior citizens, handicapped and homeless individuals through the continued efforts of the Housing Authority in developing or assisting private interests in developing housing for all types of households.

Program 4.A
Continue to support and assist in enforcing the provisions of the Federal Fair Housing Act. Information on the Fair Housing Act, as well as methods for responding to complaints, shall be available at City Hall. The materials shall also be provided to the City Library and Post Office for distribution.

Program 4.B
The City shall work with private organizations in assisting whenever possible in the housing of handicapped residents, through continued participation by the Housing Authority.

Policy 5
The City shall emphasize the provision of additional affordable senior housing projects and the protection of existing affordable senior housing units.

Program 5.A
The City shall monitor existing mobilehome parks, and shall consider the allocation of Housing Set-Aside funds to correct health and safety concerns as they arise.

Policy 6
There shall be equal access to housing regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, family status or sexual preference.

Policy 7
In order to meet its share of regional housing needs as mandated by the State, additional housing units affordable to 90 very low income households, 87 low income households and 65 moderate income households, shall be encouraged by the City during the 1996-2001 period.

Policy 8
The City's mandated fair share of affordable housing shall be maintained by resale and rental restrictions, applicant screenings, and other appropriate mechanisms established as conditions of approval for new affordable housing projects.

Policy 9
The first priority for the City's Redevelopment Housing Set-Aside Funds shall be to provide the required 242 units of very low, low and moderate income housing during 1996-2001.

Program 9.A
The Redevelopment Agency shall annually allocate funds to eligible projects, outlined on page III-47 Strategy for Meeting Affordable Housing Need, and other projects as they are presented to the Agency.

Policy 10
In order to qualify for the City's financial assistance for the development of affordable housing, developers shall be required at a minimum:

1. To provide a minimum of 20% equity or financial contribution to the project.
2. To designate a minimum of 25% of the units for very low income households.
3. To restrict all of the units to remain affordable for a period of 20 years.

Program 10.A
The City shall prepare a standard set of qualifications and an application format for private developers seeking City financial assistance for the development of affordable housing.

Policy 11
The City may, whenever it deems feasible and necessary, reduce, subsidize or defer development fees to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

Policy 12
The City shall apply its density bonus provisions to all qualifying affordable housing projects, as shown in Table III-40,. page III-59.

Policy 13
Approximately 20 acres of the City-owned property south and west of Via Vail shall be developed for family affordable housing.

Program 13.A
The City shall prepare a conceptual site plan and a request for development proposals for a family affordable housing project on the 20 acres of City-owned property south and west of Via Vail.

Policy 14
The City shall encourage private ownership of affordable housing projects.

Policy 15
A second priority for the City's Redevelopment Housing Set-aside funds shall be for the rehabilitation of the City's existing affordable housing stock.

Program 15.A
The Housing Authority shall provide financial assistance to lower income households through its Home Improvement Program.

Policy 16
Relocation assistance shall be provided to lower income households who are displaced by public or private redevelopment activities as mandated by the State.

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Parks and Recreation Element establishes the existing and future system of parks, recreation, trails and bikeways in Rancho Mirage. The goals, policies and programs for parks and recreation are an expression of the community's needs and desires for active and passive recreation opportunities. Recreation is a major feature of the Rancho Mirage culture as evidenced by the abundance of golf courses, tennis courts and swimming pools available. Many of the City's residents and visitors choose to spend their leisure time outdoors in some form of recreation or exercise activity. Private facilities only partially fulfill the recreational needs of Rancho Mirage residents. Public park facilities and multi-use trails and trailheads to accommodate pedestrian, biking and equestrian uses are needed to complete the recreation system in Rancho Mirage.

BACKGROUND

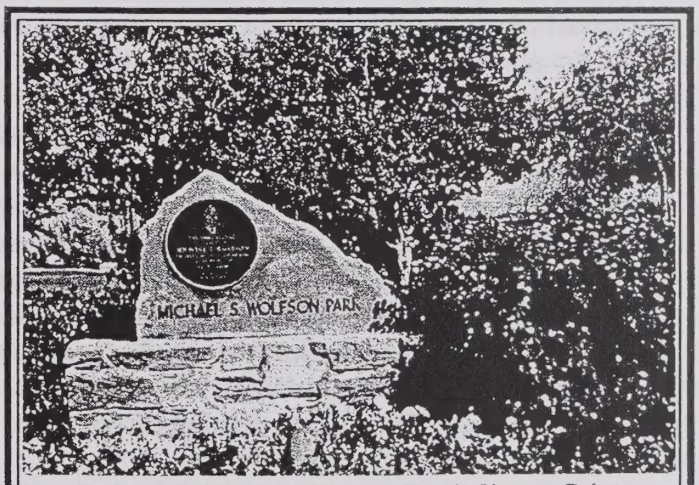
The Parks and Recreation Element has a direct relationship with the land use map in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Existing and future park sites and trails are shown on the land use map and have a bearing on the suitability of adjacent land use designations. The Parks and Recreation Element also has connections to the Open Space and Conservation Element with regard to trail usage in open space corridors and mountain environments. The recreational functions of City parks also relates to the Arts and Culture Element and to Public Buildings and Facilities Element.

The statutory references for park land dedications are found in the Subdivision Map Act. Specifically, Government Code Sections 66477 and 66479 require park site dedications, or fees in lieu of dedication, to relate to local population estimates and general plans. Recreation uses are included in the description of land use elements in Section 65302(a). Trail designations are also required as part of Section 5076 of the Public Resources Code.

In 1989, the City prepared a Parks Master Plan which became the basis for the previous Parks and Recreation Element. The Parks Master Plan included an assessment of local park needs. A supply and future demand analysis formed the basis for proposed additional park facilities to serve residents of Rancho Mirage. An important ingredient in the 1989 park needs analysis was the inclusion of park facilities in Palm Desert, Cathedral City and Indian Wells in recognition of the cross utilization of park and recreation facilities between cities. The current (1996) update of the Parks and Recreation Element should also consider adjacent cities' supply and demand for parks, especially in the categories of community-sized parks. Inter-city trail connections are equally important to consider.

Existing Parks and Trails

There are two existing parks in Rancho Mirage and one to be completed in 1996. The Whitewater Park is a 8.25 acre park located between San Jacinto Drive and the Whitewater storm channel. Originally constructed in 1982 and expanded in 1994, the Whitewater Park is the only facility in the City which accommodates a limited amount of active recreational use. The park includes four tennis courts, two basketball courts, two racquetball/handball courts, an informal softball field and a children's play area. A small covered gazebo, a walking trail, picnic benches, restrooms and a recycling drop-off complete the park. A sculptured water feature will soon be added to the facilities in the park.



Michael S. Wolfson Park on Frank Sinatra Drive

The Michael S. Wolfson Park, named in memory of former Rancho Mirage mayor and councilman Michael S. Wolfson, is a 1.1 acre mini park located at the corner of Frank Sinatra Drive and Da Vall Drive. It is a small passive park featuring themed landscaped areas, meandering walkways, and benches. The Wolfson Park also serves as a rest stop along, and an access point to one of the City's bicycle and equestrian routes.

The Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivors Park, located adjacent to the Rancho Mirage City Hall is the latest (1996) addition to the City's park system. The Cancer Survivors Park celebrates those individuals who have overcome cancer and provides an inspiration for those who may be battling the disease. The park features a survivors list on computer, several public art features, landscaping and water elements.

The City's trail system complements the recreation facilities provided by existing parks. Many of the City's bicycle paths are combined with sidewalks along major streets. The joint pedestrian and bicycle use on the standard eight foot wide meandering sidewalk is designated as a Class I bicycle facility in that it is outside of vehicular lanes of traffic. The City's primary existing facility for joint pedestrian, bicycle and horse use is located along the Whitewater Channel between Frank Sinatra and Country Club Drives.

Hiking trails in Rancho Mirage are primarily located along the foothills providing access to trails in the Magnesia Falls and Bradley Peak areas. Some of these trails follow paths, dirt roads or utility access routes though not dedicated for public use. The Bighorn Overlook behind Rancho Mirage City Hall is reached by way of a short public trail from the City Hall parking lot. All of the City's existing parks, bicycle paths, horse and hiking trails are depicted on Exhibits III-5, III-6, and III-7.

Existing Multi-City Recreation Facilities

A multi-city approach to funding park and recreation facilities which serve the Cove Communities of Palm Desert, Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage was initiated in 1990 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between these three cities. The tri-city MOU distributes the cost of recreation facilities based upon a formula of population and assessed value. The City of Rancho Mirage has contributed its share toward the construction of the sports complex located in the Palm Desert Civic Center Park. Four lighted softball fields, three basketball courts, six tennis courts and four sand volleyball courts are available to Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Indian Wells residents through the joint funding agreement. The YMCA, located in the Palm Desert Civic Center Park, is also a product of the MOU, as is the Cook Street Sports Complex adjacent to the Palm Desert High School. These facilities are also available for use by Rancho Mirage residents.

The cities of Palm Desert, Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage are also sharing the cost of the Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert. The Children's Museum to be constructed on Gerald Ford Drive in Rancho Mirage on land donated by Ambassador and Mrs. Annenberg is expected to cost $3 million. The three cities have agreed to contribute $1.6 million to be matched by $1.4 million in private funds. Construction is expected to begin by the Fall of 1996.

Parks and Trails Funding

The extent to which the City of Rancho Mirage will plan and implement parks and trails facilities is related to the availability of their funding sources. The Quimby Act was established as state law in 1965 to provide a funding mechanism for park land acquisition. Residential subdivisions must dedicate park land or pay an in-lieu fee to enable the City to acquire park land on a ratio of three (3) acres per 1000 residents. Based on the City's anticipated growth and population characteristics, it is expected that the Quimby Act requirements will provide sufficient land for the City to satisfy its projected park needs. The Quimby Act does not provide dedication or fees for the City's trail system.

The construction of parks and bicycle paths in Rancho Mirage is primarily funded by part of the City's license tax on new construction. The license tax has been established to collect fees from new developments that create a need for public facilities such as parks. In 1996, the license tax component for parks is $0.16 per square foot of new construction and $0.03 per square foot for bicycle paths based on formulas derived from projected facility needs and estimated future development. On occasion the City has received state grant funds for the construction of bicycle paths. Construction of parks and

bicycle facilities in redevelopment project areas are potentially eligible expenditures of redevelopment funds.

The sole source of parks and trails maintenance funding is the City-wide annual assessment, currently (1996) set at $13.26 per parcel. This assessment will presumably increase when additional parks are added to the system.

PARKS AND TRAILS PLANNING

The parks and trails planning process should include a local needs analysis, taking into account the particular demographic characteristics of Rancho Mirage residents and visitors. The needs analysis should be adjusted for any unique opportunities and constraints that exist or may occur in the future. The following park and trail categories should be considered in the preparation of the City's parks and trails plan.

Mini Parks

Mini parks, often referred to as pocket parks, are generally less than one acre and are intended to complement adjacent uses. Mini parks can often substitute for private open space in employment centers or high density residential areas. Mini parks may take the form of children's play lots, passive seating areas, city entry features or special purpose open space areas. Because of their small size and limited activity areas, mini parks do not count towards meeting the active recreational needs of the community and are not included in the license tax or Quimby fee calculations.

In Rancho Mirage, the Wolfson Park and the Cancer Survivors Park represent City-owned mini parks. The pond and grassy area at Da Vall Drive and Gerald Ford Drive, adjacent to the Mission Hills Country Club, used by small children to feed ducks and other birds, is a private example of an area that functions as a mini park. Mini parks often are sited on property leftover from development and, therefore, are not designated for specific sites in the City's Parks and Trails Plan. Mini parks add to the community's design and local quality of life and should be encouraged as opportunities arise.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide for the active and passive recreation needs of nearby residents in the vicinity of the park. Neighborhood park facilities typically include such features as picnic areas, playground equipment, hard court areas, a multi-purpose playfield for informal games and limited parking. Special landscaping and public art may also be featured in neighborhood parks. Pedestrian and bicycle access is important for neighborhood parks to serve nearby residents. The design of neighborhood parks must carefully consider their physical proximity and relationship to adjacent homes to avoid any adverse impacts from noise, traffic or lights.

The usual size of neighborhood parks is in the five to ten acre range. The ultimate size will depend on available land and its relationship to neighborhood residences. Although neighborhood parks should usually be within walking distance, the low residential densities, population characteristics and number of gated communities in Rancho Mirage justify a theoretical service radius of approximately 1.5 miles. The actual service area for a neighborhood park is often a function of the ease with which residents can access the park.

Neighborhood parks typically serve a population of approximately 5,000 residents. Based upon a Rancho Mirage buildout population of approximately 30,000 to 35,000 permanent residents, the City would ultimately be well served by five to six neighborhood parks. This estimated demand should consider the average age of the City's population and the fact that many residents live in gated communities containing private recreation amenities.

For Rancho Mirage residents and visitors who do not live in gated communities, neighborhood parks are an important asset. Neighborhood parks should be located on local public streets to facilitate safe and convenient access. One of the concerns often raised, however, is the fear that parks will attract outside influences and crime to the neighborhood. The design of neighborhood parks

must consider safety and security issues to assure that they become and remain assets to the neighborhood.

Whitewater Park is the City's only existing neighborhood park. As such, it attracts residents and visitors from throughout the City. Unfortunately, the Whitewater Park is not easily accessible except for those residents who live in the area between Highway 111 and the Whitewater Channel. The neighborhoods around Sunny Lane and in the Magnesia Falls area are proposed for neighborhood park sites because their residents do not have access to the private recreational amenities typically found in private communities. The Sunny Lane and Magnesia Falls neighborhood park sites are also accessible from local streets.

Two other neighborhood park sites are proposed. On City-owned property south of Dinah Shore Drive in the Monterey Specific Plan area, a neighborhood park is proposed to be located as part of a larger community park facility that abuts the proposed high density housing area. A neighborhood park is also proposed adjacent to a future school site and high density housing area along Plumley Road in the Vista Montana Specific Plan area. The planned neighborhood park sites are shown on Exhibit III-5.

Community Park

Community parks provide active and passive recreation opportunities on a larger scale than neighborhood parks. The desirable size for community parks ranges from 20 to 40 acres. Given the low population density of Rancho Mirage and adjacent cities, the appropriate service radius for a community park is about five miles.

Community parks typically include fields for organized baseball, softball, soccer and football. Tennis complexes and a large swimming pool are often included in community parks. A community recreation building may also be provided for indoor sports as well as educational and cultural activities.

Passive recreational activities may include picnic areas, formal gardens and open space areas. Adjacent neighborhoods also utilize community parks; children's play equipment may also be incorporated into community park facilities.

As described above, the Palm Desert Civic Center Park's sport complex also serves Rancho Mirage residents. The future need for an additional community park in Rancho Mirage would be satisfied by the proposed 20-25 acre park on City-owned property in the Monterey Specific Plan area as shown on Exhibit III-5. This proposed community park may also become the venue for outdoor concerts and other cultural events.

Bikeways

Bicycle facilities are categorized in I, II, or III classifications. The Class I bikeway is a bicycle path completely separated from any street or highway. Except for the bike path along the Whitewater Channel, Class I bikeways in Rancho Mirage take the form of a combined meandering sidewalk and bike path in the landscaped parkways along arterial streets. Class I bikeways only serve a recreational purpose for bicyclists. Their inherent pedestrian-bicyclist conflicts limit the use of the City's Class I system to relatively short non-commuter trips. The system of bikepaths/ sidewalks is proposed to be expanded along arterials as roadway widening and development projects occur.

Class II bikeways are signed and striped bicycle lanes within the paved section of the street. Bicycle lanes are for one-way travel by cyclists, generally for longer recreational or commuter purposes. Class II bikeways are considered to be safer than Class I facilities due to fewer cyclist-motorist conflicts at driveways and intersections. It is possible for both Class I and II facilities to be located along the same street. This would allow for a choice based on cyclists' preference.

Most of the City's arterial streets are sufficiently wide to allow for a four foot Class II bike lane along the curb.

Inclusion of bike lane facilities in the General Plan will help implement CVAG's Non-Motorized Transportation Element for the Coachella Valley, a plan which is intended to facilitate alternatives to automobile traffic. Those streets designated for Class II bikeways are shown on Exhibit III-6.

Class III bikeways are designated but unmarked bike routes on the street within vehicular travel lanes. Due to the inherent potential conflict with vehicular traffic, Class III bike routes are not recommended for Rancho Mirage except where 1.) Class I and II facilities are not feasible and where an essential regional bicycle route connection is desired, or 2.) where Class I and II facilities ar not warranted due to low traffic volumes.

Hiking Trails

In addition to the recreational use of sidewalks and bike paths by pedestrians, existing and planned hiking facilities in Rancho Mirage utilize non-paved trails in wash areas and the mountains. The beauty of the mountainous backdrop to the City invites residents and visitors to experience the scenery on foot. The public's use of mountain trails must be balanced with the need to protect wildlife habitat, especially that of the lambing areas of bighorn sheep in the Santa Rosa Mountains.

Existing and planned trails are shown on Exhibit III-7. ~~The Mirage Trail~~ A trail is proposed to provide direct or indirect access from Rancho Mirage to the Art Smith Trail in the mountains, or other paths that make up the extensive trails system in the Santa Rosa Mountains. The other area proposed for new trails is on City-owned land ~~to be~~ granted as an easement to the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy. These trails would be accessible to the public and guests at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. Other existing trails can be made more accessible by the provision of modest trail heads with limited parking.

Equestrian Trails

The City's equestrian trail planning must balance the desire of a few dedicated riders with the fact that, due to the urbanization in the Coachella Valley, safe and pleasant opportunities for horse riding are limited. The proposed horse trails are confined to those neighborhoods where the keeping of horses is permitted and where opportunities exist to connect equestrian areas with the Whitewater Channel and mountain trails. Equestrian access to trails can be improved by providing equestrian oriented trailhead facilities where appropriate and warranted. Equestrian trails are depicted on Exhibit III-7.

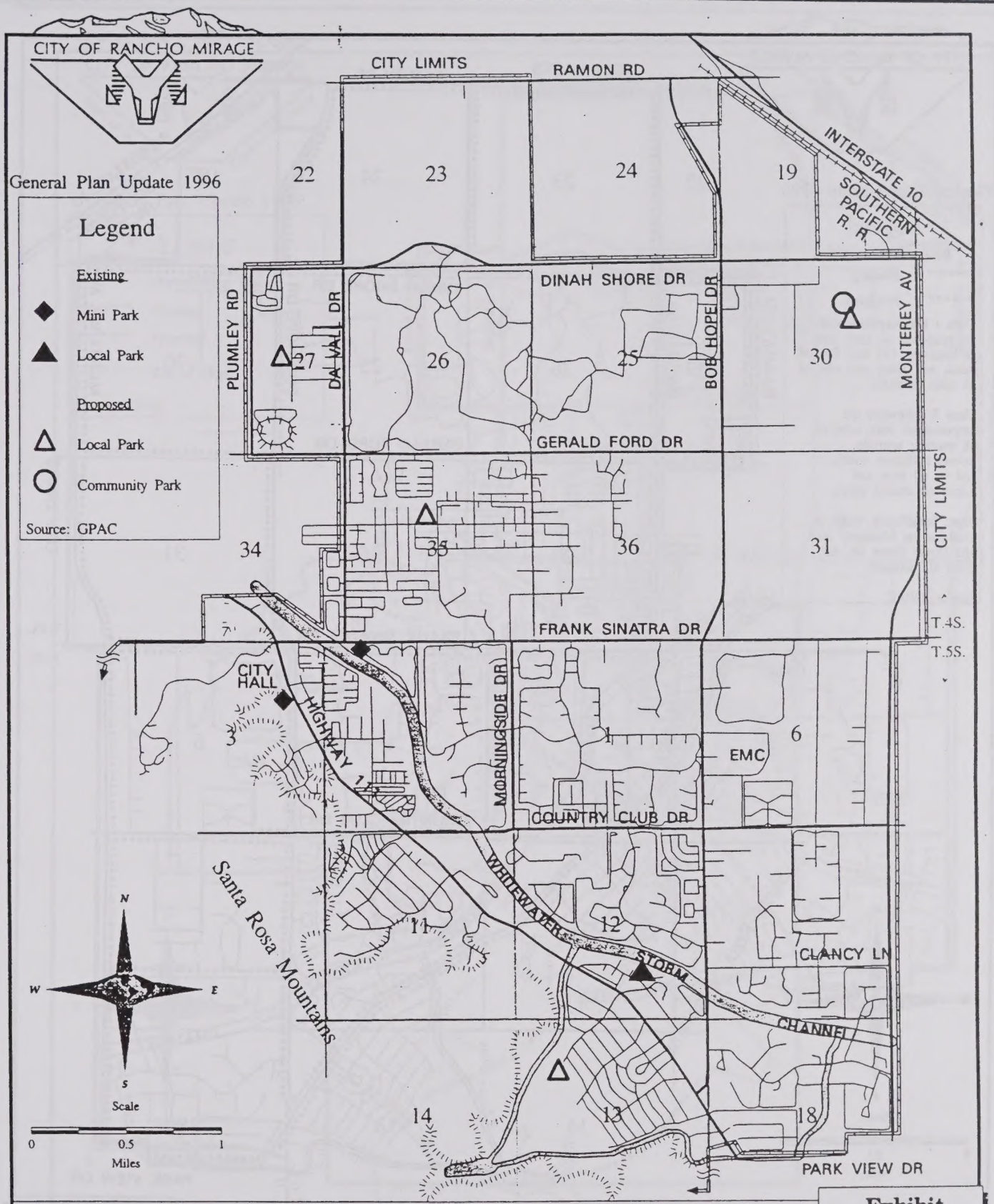


Exhibit III-5

Parks Master Plan

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

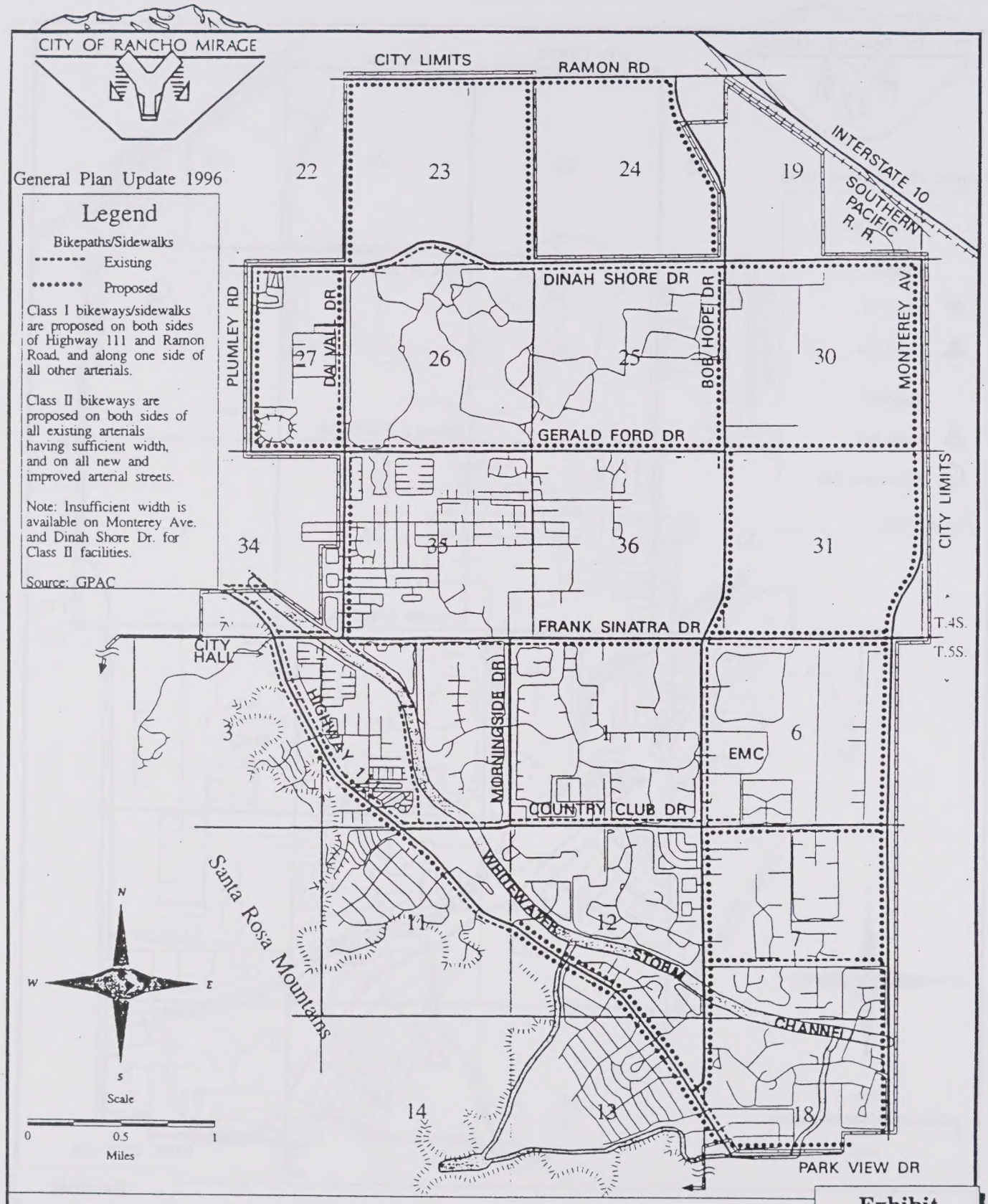


Exhibit III-6

Bikepaths/Sidewalks

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

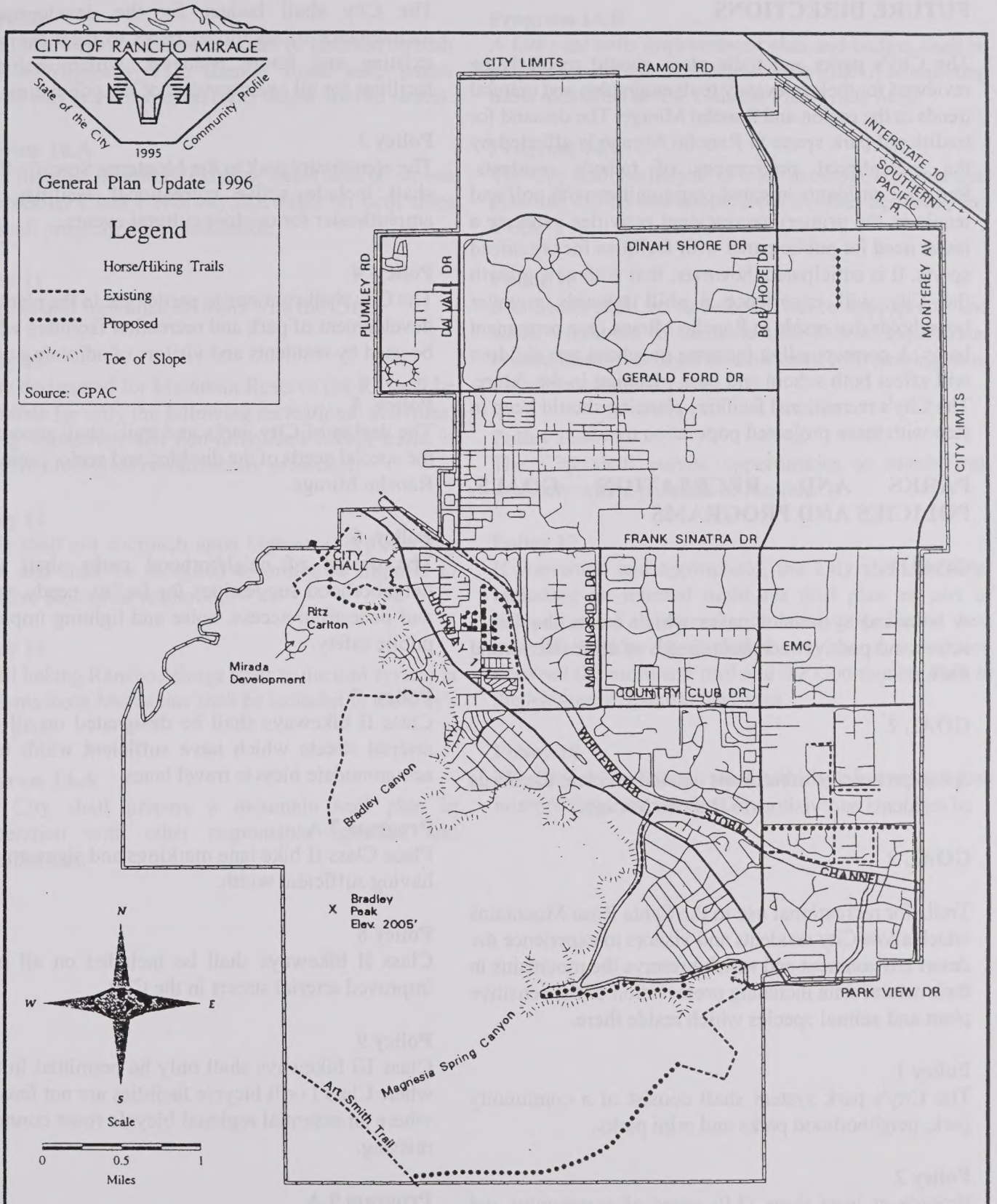


Exhibit III-7

Horse/Hiking Trails

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City's parks and trails plans should regularly be reviewed for their relevancy to demographic and cultural trends in the region and Rancho Mirage. The demand for traditional park space in Rancho Mirage is affected by the recreational preferences of today's residents. Part-time residents in gated communities with golf and tennis as the primary recreational activities generate a lesser need for public parks with facilities for organized sports. It is anticipated, however, that with new growth the City will experience a shift towards younger households that reside in Rancho Mirage on a permanent basis. A corresponding increase in school age children will affect both school and park planning in the future. The City's recreational facilities planning should keep in step with these projected population trends.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A balanced system of parks which meets the City's active and passive recreation needs of all residents and visitors.

GOAL 2

A comprehensive urban trails network to meet the needs of residents and visitors to Rancho Mirage.

GOAL 3

Trails for recreational use in the Santa Rosa Mountains which allow City residents and visitors to experience the desert environment and which preserve the mountains in their natural state including preservation of the sensitive plant and animal species which reside there.

Policy 1
The City's park system shall consist of a community park, neighborhood parks and mini parks.

Policy 2
Provide at least three (3.0) acres of community and neighborhood park land per 1,000 population.

Program 2.A
The City shall budget for the development and maintenance of additional parks to meet the needs of existing and future residents, which include park facilities for all age segments of the population.

Policy 3
The community park in the Monterey Specific Plan area shall include active recreational facilities and an amphitheater for outdoor cultural events.

Policy 4
The City shall continue to participate in the planning and development of park and recreation facilities which can be used by residents and visitors of adjoining cities.

Policy 5
The design of City parks and trails shall accommodate the special needs of the disabled and senior population in Rancho Mirage.

Policy 6
The design of neighborhood parks shall consider neighborhood suggestions for facility needs, vehicular and pedestrian access, noise and lighting impacts, and public safety.

Policy 7
Class II bikeways shall be designated on all existing arterial streets which have sufficient width to safely accommodate bicycle travel lanes.

Program 7.A
Place Class II bike lane markings and signs on arterials having sufficient width.

Policy 8
Class II bikeways shall be included on all new and improved arterial streets in the City.

Policy 9
Class III bikeways shall only be permitted in the City where Class I or II bicycle facilities are not feasible and where an essential regional bicycle route connection is missing.

Program 9.A
The City shall inventory existing major arterial streets for missing regional bicycle route links and shall designate Class III bikeways only where Class I or II facilities are not feasible.

Policy 10
Class I bikeways and sidewalks shall be installed on both sides of Highway 111, Ramon Road and, where right-of-way is available, on other major arterial streets.

Program 10.A
The City shall inventory existing major arterial streets for potential Class I bikeway/sidewalks on both sides and shall program their installation.

Policy 11
Dedicate and formalize all trails with the City.

Policy 12
Lands designated for Mountain Reserve (M-R) shall be accessible for only the following recreational activities: hiking, equestrian and non-motorized biking trails, if sensitive biological resources are protected.

Policy 13
Trails shall not encroach upon bighorn sheep lambing areas and shall be designed to minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources.

Policy 14
A trail linking Rancho Mirage trails to the trail system in the Santa Rosa Mountains shall be included in the City's trails plan.

Program 14.A
The City shall prepare a mountain trail plan in cooperation with other responsible agencies and organizations.

Program 14.B
A five year trails improvement plan and budget shall be prepared and implemented, with the goal of completing trails identified on the General Plan Trails Map.

Program 14.C
The City shall participate in and encourage regional trail planning efforts and cooperate with other agencies, and cities.

Policy 15
Trailheads shall be developed where appropriate and when warranted to facilitate trail access. Equestrian-oriented trailheads shall be developed with parking areas for horse trailers.

Policy 16
The City shall pursue opportunities to obtain trail corridors where possible or feasible.

Policy 17
If warranted and appropriate, the City shall consider including an internal multi-use trail plan as part of preparation of an internal circulation plan for the west half of Section 30. Included may be a connection between the multi-use trail and the Community Park in the Monterey Specific Plan area.

Policy 18
The City shall evaluate the feasibility of developing an interpretive center in the City.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Community Design Element is to define, direct and guide coherent and satisfying patterns of development in the City of Rancho Mirage, and to assure that new development is balanced with the existing built and natural environments. The element provides consideration of all facets of urban design and planning and the natural spaces around them that subtly and profoundly shape the image of the community. This element helps to establish basic criteria, promote good and thoughtful design, and enhance community cohesiveness and coherence. The design of the community and its physical development should reflect the essential values of the residents. In this regard, the Community Design Element provides a general set of principles that will guide decision makers in the design review process.

It is the intent of the Community Design Element to describe and define the essential design issues particularly relevant to the City of Rancho Mirage. These include the high value placed on the City's image as a prestigious resort residential community and the valuable natural resources and their continued preservation and enjoyment.

BACKGROUND

The Community Design Element is directly related to the Land Use, Circulation, and Open Space and Conservation Elements. Attitudes toward land use, traffic, community safety and appearance, and environ-mental systems reinforce continuity, uniqueness and a special sense of place. On a more basic level, the Community Design Element reflects sensitivity to community quality, environmental sensitivity and a desire to preserve the best qualities of this resort residential community, while addressing the more practical and functional needs of it's residents, businesses and visitors.

The need for and appropriateness of community design standards and criteria for development within the community is clearly recognized in California law. These include Government Code Section 65302(a), which addresses standards that affect population density and building intensity. Also applicable are laws providing local empowerment for preservation of open space lands as set forth in Government Code Sections 66477 and 65470. Most relevant is Government Code Section 65302, which states that "the General Plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals".

The adoption of community design standards is reinforced by other legislation, including the 1990 California Legislature enactment of Assembly Bill 325, the Water Conservation In Landscaping Act, which recognizes the state's responsibility in mitigating the effects of urbanization on its finite water resources, and the potential savings from water conserving landscape practices. In accordance with the act, the City has adopted a water conservation-oriented landscape ordin-ance, which meets conservation targets and addresses community design concerns.

In sustaining and enhancing the quality of life in the City of Rancho Mirage, the community clearly declares and puts into effect the essential goals and policies of the General Plan. Environmentally and aesthetically sensitive design is essential to the preservation and enhancement of the resort residential character and property values of the community. The scale and scope of land use patterns, management of transportation, flood control facilities and community open space and conservation areas must respond and complement the human and greater environment to reflect the City's long-term community character envisioned in the General Plan.

Integrating Natural Systems as a Basic Strategy

Development and population growth cause substantial environmental effects. These can be best addressed through a thoughtful integration of the natural environmental systems with those of the built environment. By developing and projecting a holistic picture of the mature City, and with a sensitivity to site-specific design/development, these ideas provide the basis for innovative uses of old and new approaches. For instance, flood control channels are viewed not only as storm drains but also as opportunities for development of

wildlife corridors and as enhanced open space for hikers, equestrians and biking enthusiasts. The City General Plan also espouses resource conservation practices such as building designs that conserve energy, recycling valuable resources, reducing exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment, and reducing demand for water by reintroducing the desert with the built environment. Combined, these strategies value and preserve essential resources while expanding economic growth and opportunity (See Public Utilities Element).

Foundations of the Community Design Element

The technical and philosophic basis for community design is most important in its actual effects on the design, development and build-out of the City. With major local, state and interstate roadways passing through the City and the associated dependence on and commitment to automobile travel, sustaining the character and quality of life in Rancho Mirage depends on three major areas of focus: continuity, uniqueness and "placemaking".

Continuity

The continuity of Rancho Mirage is a recognition and continuation of characteristics handed down over time that create connections to the natural and historic features of the City and the Coachella Valley. The challenge of living in the desert is undeniable and demands respect for the larger environment and the history and character of the community. The City's established tradition of quality design and develop-ment, a sense of permanence and character, attention to maintenance, and development of buildings and places for multiple use are the backbone and the reflection of community pride in design.

Continuity in design can be maintained through an adherence to the essentials of scale and proportion, materials and color, and site and setting. The integration of the natural desert environment into the urban fabric will also extend the continuity in design of the community. Within these essential principles, a variety of architectural styles can be supported, including adobe, mission style and modern derivations of each, as well as modern designs ranging from the International Style to fantasy architecture.

The desert provides a dramatic and flexible palette for design, as well as clear constraints and opportunities to living in a dry and sunny climate. The use of native and other drought tolerant landscaping also extends the continuity of the desert into the built environment. The use of gravel, rocks and boulders further enhances the continuity of the built and natural environments.

Uniqueness

Rancho Mirage's natural setting and its highly recognizable characteristics define the City as a unique and special place. A distinctive feature of Rancho Mirage is the lush landscaped foreground against the barren mountain background as viewed from developed areas in the community. By integrating the natural environment through thoughtful grading and revegetation, and the use of building and landscape materials indigenous to the area, the character of the community and its setting can be preserved and enhanced. With world-class natural and built environs that attract resort visitors, second home residents from all walks of life, artists, professionals and others that value Rancho Mirage's special environment, the City has unique and valuable assets upon which to build.

The uniqueness of Rancho Mirage can be preserved through adherence to quality design standards, including thoughtful and controlled grading and site development. Encouraging the re-integration of native desert and other appropriate drought-tolerant landscaping materials will also preserve and enhance the City's uniqueness.

A wide variety of native plants make up the local landscape palette; ocotillo, barrel cactus, encilia, agave, date palms, California fan palms, and a wide variety of cactus and succulents are essential symbols of the community and provide endless design opportunities. The emulation of the natural landscape and the enhancement of wildlife habitat furthers the unique qualities of the community.

Placemaking

The sense of continuity that has developed in Rancho Mirage, and the unique environment for living and vacationing, have made Rancho Mirage a special "place" destination of distinction in the Coachella Valley. Existing and future design shall continue traditions of quality planning, design, materials and craftsmanship essential to assuring structures and other aspects of the

built environment of which the City can be proud. Moreover, quality design standards in most thoughtful development need cost no more, and can cost the community much less than poorly conceived and insensitive design. The near and long-term benefits to the community of well conceived design and quality development are significant.

Rancho Mirage, the Coachella Valley and the local environs of the Sonoran Desert are destinations for millions of visitors each year. With the effective creation of a regional sense of place, the City hosts developments and environs that are local attractions and include world class resorts and many unique and prestigious residential developments. Important institutions such as the Eisenhower Medical Center also lend a sense of place to the City. Nonetheless, many opportunities must be pursued, including commercial and other types of non-residential development that can also provide an important basis of "placemaking" in Rancho Mirage.

Context and the Opportunities of Contrast

The beauty and delicacy of the background desert and mountain environments, and those portions of the built environment that we cherish and hope to preserve are the primary context within which community design judgements are made. The sharp contrast between the natural and built environment is a unique opportunity for community design. The level of assessment and the appropriate perspective will vary with the land use and location being considered. For instance, residential development proposed on highly exposed slopes, and industrial development plans will require distinctly different design review criteria. In every instance, new development is required to respect its location and the scale and character of the surrounding built environment, while other concerns will stand out when considering various types of proposals.

Harmony and Disharmony

The character of Rancho Mirage is reflected both in the high degree of harmony between the built and natural environment, and the limited but highly visible disharmony of development within parts of the City. A wide range of siting and architectural design opportunities are available and should allow the City to retain the low intensity resort-residential commun-ity character in new development. Adhering to height limits, the use of natural materials, and complementary colors and tones for building surfaces, and the generous integration of open space into community design concepts are more in keeping with the essential character of Rancho Mirage.

Nonetheless, flexibility and sensitive design evaluation, and the ability to see the positive qualities of various architectural styles are also essential to a responsive design review process. If quality design is lacking and cannot be secured from the developer or architect, then unsatisfactory development proposals should not be approved. Sensitive design harmonizes with surrounding buildings, avoids excessive disruption and does not overtly compete for attention.

Contrasting design approaches should avoid being abrasive and seek a civilized and lively integration with the existing and planned built environment. It is equally important not to homogenize the design elements of a neighborhood, leaving it as a boring repetition of elevations, roof lines and building materials and colors, or to promote an eclectic collection of styles.

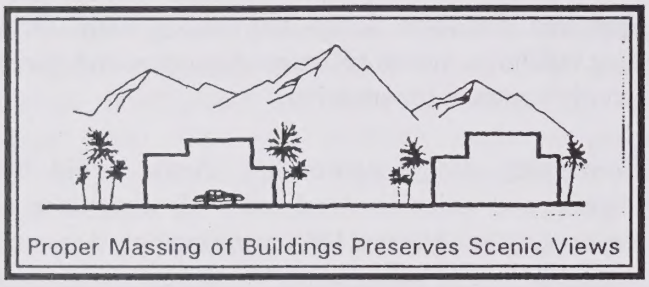
Criteria for Evaluating Building and Site Design

The evaluation of building and site design should focus on the relationship of new and in-fill development to other structures and the larger environment. Scenic, architectural, landscape architectural resources, and the established character of a neighborhood provide basic design parameters for proposed development. Planning and design criteria assist in determining a project's compatibility with the surrounding area. These criteria include:

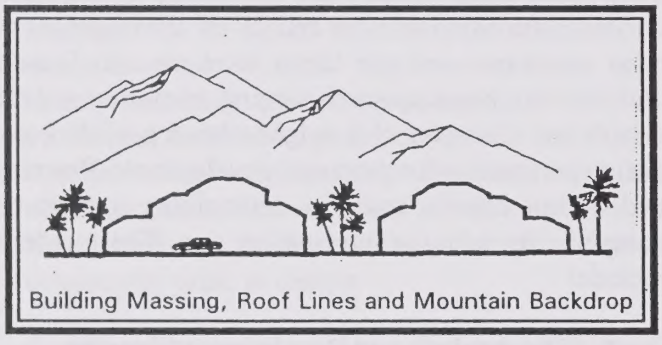
* Site Analysis and Development Planning
* Building Height
* Building and Structural Setbacks
* Proportions and Massing
* Pattern and Rhythm of Structures
* Roof Types and Materials
* Surface Color and Texture
* Building Projections
* Architectural Details
* Landscape Architectural Treatment

Site Analysis and Development Planning

In all development, site analysis provides one of the most important and frequently under exploited opportunities to understand the limitations and possibilities of the site. Interest regarding development on highly exposed sites with valued scenic resources may conflict with the scenic, open space goals, and community design goals of the community. Site analysis and efficient development staging can help limit the amount and cost of grading, can maximize lot and


Proper Massing of Buildings Preserves Scenic Views

building orientation, and provide a site and structure that optimizes the opportunities and the constraints of the development site.


Building Massing, Roof Lines and Mountain Backdrop

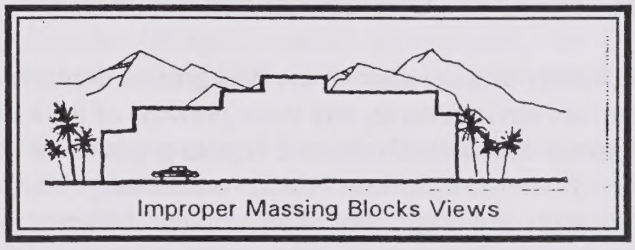
Building Proportions, Height and Setbacks

New structures should be similar in height to and compatible with other buildings in the vicinity, and with the goal of preserving and enhancing design qualities of the built environment while preserving viewsheds. Setbacks should be compatible with those of surrounding structures and scenic resources, providing building presence without allowing the structure or development to dominate other buildings, the streetscape or the natural scenic viewshed.

The proportions of proposed residential, commercial or industrial structures will also affect their compatibil-ity with site and surrounding conditions. Establishing a relationship between existing and planned development must be carefully considered. New development may set a standard that is meant to rejuvenate a neighborhood, giving it greater influence in establishing future design criteria for that neighborhood. In other instances, it will be more appropriate for new development to be equivalent or subordinate to older structures and the prevailing development pattern. Generally, however, height and width of building elevations should not be dramatically out of character with existing neighborhood development or natural scenic viewsheds.

Pattern and Rhythm in Community Design

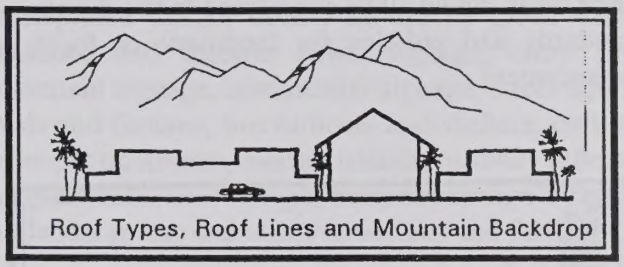
Nature makes and human communities strive to adopt natural and instinctively pleasing patterns and rhythms of motifs and massings in community development. How


Improper Massing Blocks Views

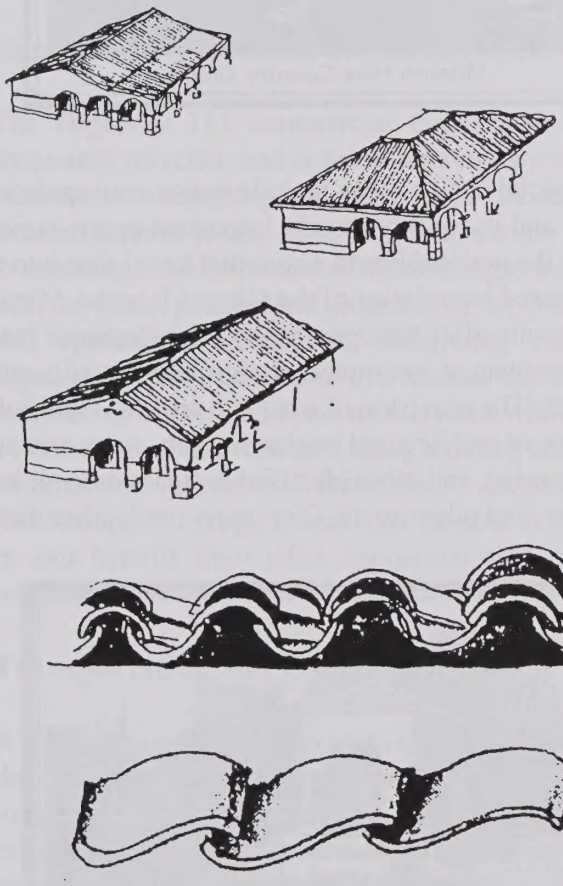
well these elements are handled can range from harmonious to dissident relationships. The recurrent alteration of peaks and slopes of the hills and the mountains can be emulated and complemented in the design of building roof lines, and in the space and solids of buildings. The development of pattern and rhythm establishes a theme when viewed in the context of surrounding development. At close quarters, pedestrians should be provided with a varied integration of struc-ture and landscaping to soften and tie the structural elements to the natural ones.

Roof Types and Materials

The rhythmic patterns in new buildings and landscape architectural treatments should complement and integrate with the established structures and surroun-ding natural environment. Roof types and materials can play a critical role in either complementing or degrading the natural scenic viewshed.


Roof Types, Roof Lines and Mountain Backdrop

Roof types, from flat to multiple arrays of hipped roofs, provide a range of possibilities for contrasting or imitative treatment. Unnecessary building heights are frequently related to roof design and the desire to create a particular type of space within the structure. Roof



design must be balanced with the building elevation it helps to create. The same design concerns of scale, pattern and rhythm are applicable to the compatibility of roof design and materials.

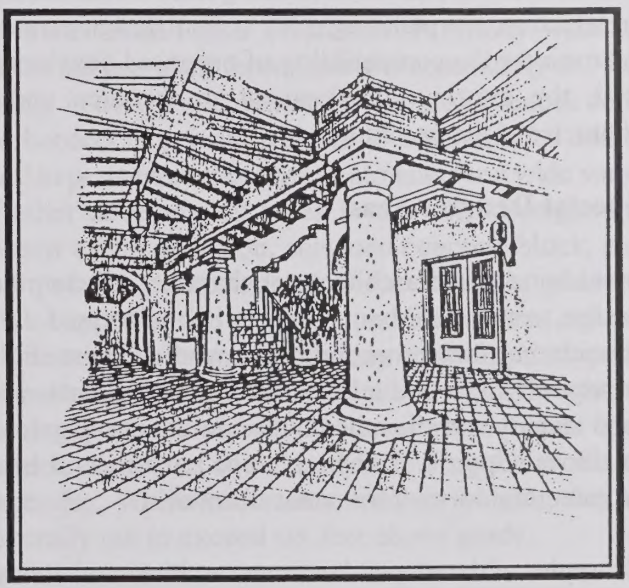
Surface Texture and Color

Prevailing sunny conditions in conjunction with the light color of the surrounding desert and light vegeta-tion make the selection of surface texture and color especially critical to compatibility issues. Surfaces that emulate the coarse, warm tones of the surrounding valley and hills are highly desirable, while slick and shiny finishes produce glaring surfaces that do not integrate well with the viewshed or are not pleasing to the eye. However, the emergence of post-modern and other hybrid architectural styles, with their juxtaposition of architectural motifs and the use of contrasting, unusual colors and building materials, are examples of how contrast can be made compatible within broader standards.

Surface texture differs from patterns and rhythm in that texture is provided on a substantially reduced scale and seldom acts as a strong design element that is equal in effect to architectural pattern or massing. Styles change with time and while the use of strong color may play a dominant part in the design of structures, color is easier to change once development has occurred. The use of texture ranges from smooth adobe-type stucco or plaster to fluted, split-face concrete aggregate block. As with other elements of design, texture must be used carefully so as to complement the overall design while being compatible with surrounding materials.

Building Projections and Architectural Details

Much of a building's design is expressed in the detail and projections that grow out of the building envelope.



Building projections and other architectural details play important functional and aesthetic roles in a building's

efficiency as shelter and appearance. Providing privacy and screening from the elements, projections and architectural detail also affect how well the building harmonizes with surrounding development. The use of porches and verandas can further enhance residential living space and provide protection from sun and wind. While simple and ornate architectural detail may each represent legitimate design principles, buildings of each style may clash or contrast with surrounding development, and suffer from the comparison. The appropriateness of a particular building design must be viewed within the context of the building's natural setting and man-made environment.

Site Planning and Community Design

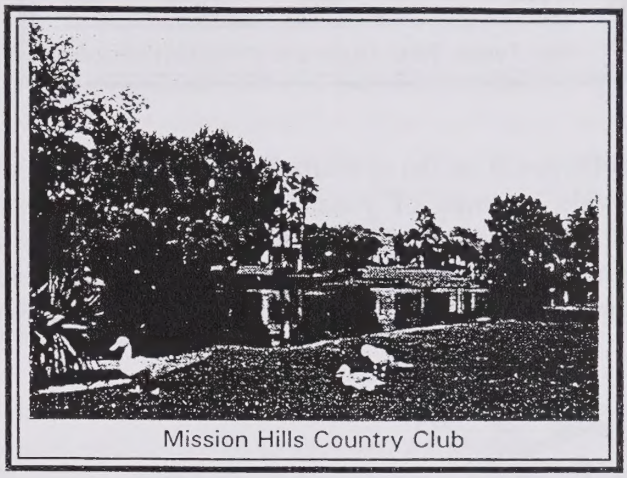
Site planning involves the distribution of buildings, parking, driveways and landscaped open space areas over a site. It establishes the development's relationship to the street and surrounding lands. The impacts of site design are not always easy to visualize and assess without the development of a detailed site plan. Frequently, the complexity or importance of a proposed development may make it appropriate to require the preparation of perspective renderings of the plan and structures.

Care should be taken not to allow artistic applications of color, landscaping and graphic eye wash to obscure or misrepresent the final product as it will actually appear on the development site. Together with building architecture, site planning is the critical design parameter determining the compatibility of proposed development with the existing development in the area and the character of the community.

Special Design Areas

In addition to the architectural character of community design, other elements must be addressed when considering the community as a whole. These include areas with important landmarks and focal points, which lend identity and character to the community. Landmarks or focal points may include natural, historic, architectural, or cultural areas of interest.

Examples of developed landscape architectural elements include the Mission Hills lagoon on the corner of Frank Sinatra Drive and Da Vall Drive, which provides a quasi-public park environment. Landscaping elements, monumentation, signage, site furnishings, and open space areas should all be considered in the development standards and policies for landmark or focal point enhancement.



Mission Hills Country Club

Other special design areas include major entry points to the City and its neighborhoods. Important oppor-tunities exist for the noticeable and distinctive transi-tion into the incorporated boundaries of the City of Rancho Mirage. Entry points offer the opportunity to incorporate many of the elements of community design into a quality entry statement. The provision of adequate area for significant landscape or architectural treatment, City entry signage, special paving, and other identifiable treatments all lend character and identity to City entry and other focus points (also see Scenic Highways discussion in this element).

Sunline Bus Shelter

Faced with a broad range of community design issues, development design details should be given careful attention, and include street signage, entry point monument signage, commercial signage, street lighting levels and fixtures, bus turnouts and shelters, curb and pavement treatments, median islands, roadway reflectors and guardrails, on-road graphics, streetscape treatment and landscaping, and utility structures and facilities.

Over the past many years, the City has taken numerous steps to address community design. A new sign ordinance was adopted in 1994 allowing more variety in business signage. Landscaped median island design guidelines have been developed and implemented. Bus shelter architectural guidelines have been adopted, and City entry monument designs have been approved.

Signage and Viewsheds of Public Rights-of-Way

The Highway 111 commercial corridor is the most frequently traveled, and is most impacted by signage of businesses attempting to make their existence and location known. It may be appropriate in some instances to encourage the retirement of existing signs inconsistent with the goals, policies and programs of the General Plan and applicable ordinances. Enhancing commercial signage should be conducted in a manner that minimizes the adverse economic impact on business, while assuring a restoration of the viewshed along existing and planned commercial corridors. Businesses located within Redevelopment project areas may be able to participate in and benefit from RDA sponsored sign renovation programs.

Transportation and Community Design

A broad range of transportation-oriented community design issues must be faced as the community continues to grow. Development design issues and details that must be given careful attention include street signage, entry point monument signage, commercial signage, street lighting levels and fixtures, bus turnouts and shelters, curb and pavement treatments, median island and parkway design and landscaping, roadway reflectors and guardrails, bike lanes and other on-road graphics, and utility structures and facilities. Such items as sidewalks must be given careful attention to assure pedestrian safety while preserving the resort residential character of the community.

The Highway 111 corridor is an essential and critical component of community design in Rancho Mirage, providing arterial circulation in the City while effectively linking the Cove Communities. Many functional and community design goals can be achieved through the detailed design and planning for Highway 111 ultimate buildout. Revitalizing Highway 111 is essential to establish and communicate Rancho Mirage quality, character and identity. The safe, functionally efficient and aesthetically pleasing design and construction of Highway 111 is a key element in the City's overall economic health and prosperity. This highway serves numerous regionally generated traffic demands.

Neighborhood Design

The City of Rancho Mirage prides itself on having a wide variety of neighborhood settings. Attributes that can make a neighborhood or private community unique include:

Architecture: Architectural commonality can be established throughout the neighborhood through the coordinated and complementary use of various design components, including building colors, roof design and tile color, window and garage door treatment and architectural building accents and details. These components should be mixed to create a balance of variety, compatibility and conformity or cohesion.

Perimeter Wall/Fence Treatment: Perimeter walls and fences are prevalent throughout the community and vary widely in design and materials. Walls and fences define the borders of private residential communities and are used in perimeter landscape treatments for a wide variety of other development types in the City. Designs may consist of wrought iron, stuccoed concrete block, plain and painted slumpstone, split-faced block, plastered, brick-capped or tile accented, and intermittent columns or pilasters. Walls and fences may be straight, stepped or meandering. Interspersing solid walls with wrought iron fencing provides views into development open space areas and relieves the closed in feeling that walls can engender. While walls may vary in height, they are generally not to exceed six feet above grade.

The majority of the City's private residential communities are completely screened from public view by walls and landscaping. In addition to closing off these

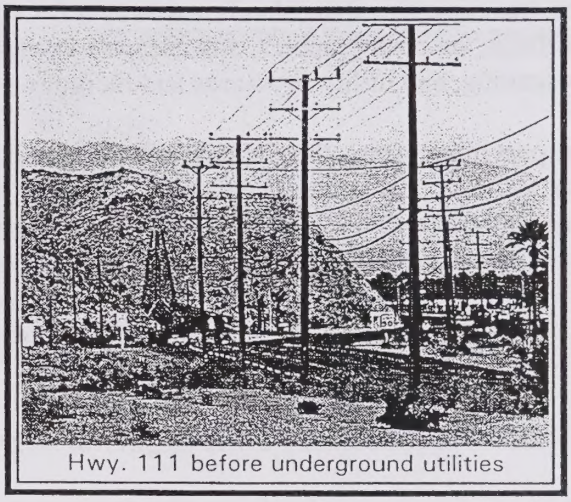
spaces from the public right-of-way, continuous solid walls can create the above-mentioned canyon effect. Wider parkways provide additional wall set backs and landscape treatment that reduce the enclosed feeling. The integration of wall breaks and fenestration along public rights-of-way help to integrate private community open space and viewsheds with those of the traveling public. The City should encourage the continued use of this type of viewshed window as a means of reducing the tunnel effect and preserving scenic vistas.

Parkway Landscaping: One of the most prominent and visible exterior features of neighborhoods and private communities is parkway landscape treatments. Design ranges from the formal to the "natural" or combinations of both approaches. Formal design may include ordered rows of date palms or other distinctive trees, regularly interspersed with equally ordered shrubs and beds for annuals plantings. More informal designs seek to imitate nature by interspersing native and non-native desert plantings in more of a free-form or random pattern. Groupings of major elements and the use of lawn areas may also be integrated into both more and less formal designs.

Community Design in Public Facilities

Community design issues encompass the entire City and include public buildings, utilities, and street traffic control and safety devises that have the potential to detract from the appearance of the community. The City has consistently made the quality appearance of the City as one of its prime priorities. Current efforts include the development of unique and distinctive desert brown street signage with the City logo. Desert colors and tones have also been integrated into traffic signals and lighting standards to soften their impact on the surrounding viewshed.

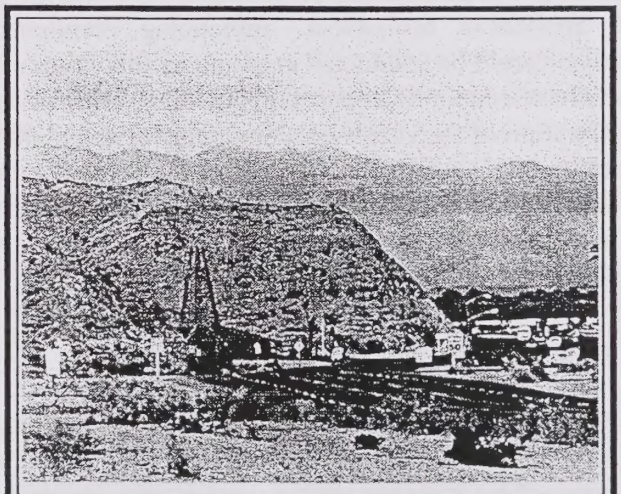
Bus shelter design has also been a high priority, making these facilities functionally superior and aesthetically pleasing. These structures utilize architectural styles that complement the streetscape treatment and elevate the appearance of these utilitarian structures. Utility cabinets located along the street, including traffic signal and telephone switching facilities are frequently painfully obvious. Efforts to have these installed in underground vaults have been resisted but more success has been had with having these highly visible facilities painted more neutral desert colors. Likewise, overhead utility lines present visual obtrusions to the natural setting and may pose safety hazards which should be minimized by a program of utility undergrounding.



Hwy. 111 before underground utilities

Scenic Highways and Major Entry Points

Some of the most important community assets are the scenic resources of the Coachella Valley, including the



Hwy.111 after underground utilities

San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and other mountain ranges surrounding and encompassing the City, and the desert floor. Preservation of these scenic vistas has been an important goal of the community. However, various types of land development, the construction of buildings and walls, landscaping, roads and the extension of utility lines and other facilities have all impacted and

threatened to degrade the scenic resources of the community.

The City's natural scenic beauty, as viewed from public thoroughfares and private lands, provides residents and visitors with a direct experience of the dramatic landforms that define the character of the community. The protection and enhancement of the City's viewsheds is critical to promoting the quality image of Rancho Mirage. An essential part of this effort is the identification of important areas of significant natural scenic value and setting standards to preserve these resources with continued urban development.

The scenic resources of Rancho Mirage are most apparent to the traveling public. The natural vistas visible from City streets cannot be properly viewed or appreciated if screened by buildings, walls and landscaping or the indiscriminate placement of signage. The City, County and State are all active players in scenic resources preservation efforts.

Rancho Mirage has a variety of important entry and focus points, which provide opportunities for reinforcement of the City's identification and scenic viewshed enhancements. The integration of monu-ments and appropriate signage, as well as special streetscape and landscape treatments, can be used to reflect the community's unique character. Focal points can be located anywhere along major routes, including important street corners, within parks and other public open space, civic buildings, schools and historic areas.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Community design considerations, including preservation and enhancement of scenic highways, can subtly and profoundly shape the image of the community. Establishing basic criteria to promote good and thoughtful design that enhances community cohesiveness and coherence has allowed Rancho Mirage to emerge as a premier residential resort community. Community design considerations are directly related to issues associated with land use, traffic, arts and culture, health and safety, economic development and environmental systems.

The Community Design Element can be implemented by several mechanisms, which include the thoughtful application of the other Elements of the General Plan, the City Zoning Ordinance, and through Redevelop-ment Plans and Specific Plans for individual project areas. The most effective instrument will be the Zoning Ordinance, which sets forth specific standards and establishes design parameters for site planning and building design. On the zoning district level, the Zoning Ordinance will assure that development occurs in a manner consistent with the design goals of the community.

COMMUNITY DESIGN GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

City-wide design and development which enhances the community's distinctive character as a premier low density resort residential community and preserves and enhances the natural scenic resources in harmony with the built environment.

GOAL 2

Variety of community design, architecture and landscaping compatible with the City's desert setting and surrounding development.

Policy 1
Private and public sector development projects shall equally apply City community design standards, thereby protecting the community's scenic viewsheds, providing community cohesion and enhancing the image of Rancho Mirage as a premier resort residential community.

Program 1.A
Amend and maintain an appropriate comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and other regulatory documents, which define the design parameters within which public and private development projects must perform. Comprehensive application packages and document outlines shall be prepared and maintained to guide the preparation of Specific Plans, Conditional Use, Development Plan and other permits, and assure a thorough review of all community design issues.

Policy 2
The planning and design of residential neighborhoods shall provide distinctive and characteristic design

elements along public rights-of-way and within the project, creating a recognizable sense of place.

Policy 3
Multi-family residential projects shall provide well-designed and neighborhood enhancing living space, usable and safe private and common open space areas, adequate parking and appropriate automobile storage, screened trash enclosures, a comprehensive landscape program, and perimeter walls and fencing.

Policy 4
Commercial development and mixed use projects shall consist of integrated designs that incorporate safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian-oriented circulation, safe and convenient ingress and egress, shared parking, screened outdoor storage/loading and other noisy or unsightly areas, protected outdoor seating areas, lighting, signage and the planting of mature landscaping to provide an immediate effect of permanency and quality.

Policy 5
Detailed landscape architectural and special signage designs, which reflect the character of the develop-ment, shall be required for City and project entries, scenic roadways and other City focal points.

Policy 6
Establish vista points with interpretive displays, rest areas, and information kiosks which could be developed at key locations along scenic corridors and elsewhere in the City.

Policy 7
Integrate appropriate landscape materials and site-sensitive architectural designs into all public and private building projects to enhance the community's cohesion between the built and natural environment.

Policy 8
Walled residential and commercial development projects shall be designed to provide views into these developments from the public right-of-way through the use of wall breaks or fenestration, but in a manner that does not compromise privacy, security or interior noise levels.

Policy 9
Building heights shall be limited to one story, unless the need, compatibility and appropriateness of additional height is demonstrated through the application of pad elevation controls, increased building setbacks and viewshed protection measures.

Policy 10
All signs shall be limited to the minimum size, scale and number needed to provide functional identification and exposure necessary to convey messages, while minimizing impacts on traffic safety, streetscape and scenic viewsheds. The City shall make every reasonable effort to eliminate billboards within the City limits.

Policy 11
Lighting shall be limited to the minimum height, number and intensity of fixtures needed to provide security and identification in residential, commercial and other development, taking every reasonable measure to preserve the community's night skies.

Policy 12
Incorporate appropriate City identification into entry features, street signage, public buildings, planters and median islands, benches and other streetscape furnishings, City vehicles and other similar applications.

Policy 13
Development proposed along designated scenic highways, roadways and corridors shall be reviewed for compatibility with the natural and built environments to assure maximize viewshed protection and pedestrian and vehicular safety.

Program 13.A
Scenic roadway streetscape designs, which enhance street appearance and provide safer vehicular and pedestrian movements, shall be programmed into the City's roadway capital improvements program. Said program shall also establish development guidelines to protect and enhance scenic values along these roadways.

Policy 14
Overhead utility lines shall be undergrounded to the greatest extent practical through the establishment of an undergrounding program and guidelines.

Policy 15
Overhead utility lines along scenic roadways shall have primary consideration, to the greatest extent practical, for City funding for utility undergrounding.

Policy 16
Water wells, utility substations, switching and control facilities associated with same shall be screened to preserve scenic viewsheds and limit visual clutter.

Policy 17
Development projects located at sites identified for major and minor City entry and focal features shall dedicate the required land for the development of these landmark features.

Policy 18
All grading and development proposed within scenic highway viewsheds, including hillsides, entry and focal points, shall be regulated to minimize adverse impacts to these viewsheds.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Economic and Fiscal Element provides an understanding of Rancho Mirage's position in the regional economy, the relationship between land use and economic policies and their effects upon the financial well-being of the City. Past conditions which have contributed to the City's strong financial position must be continually reevaluated for their relevancy in a growing and changing economy. Economic development and fiscal issues are closely related and are appropriately combined into one element. As part of the General Plan, economic and fiscal policies are important to the City's ability to maintain and enhance the quality of the physical, economic, social and cultural life enjoyed by the residents, businesses and visitors in Rancho Mirage.

The Economic and Fiscal Element has a strong relationship with the Land Use Element. Government Code Section 65030.2 provides the statutory reference for this relationship: "land use decisions shall be made with full knowledge of their economic and fiscal implications, giving consideration to short term costs and benefits, and their relationship to long-term environmental impact as well as long-term costs and benefits". The Economic and Fiscal Element bears a lesser relationship to the Community Design Element and the Public Services and Facilities Element's policies for maintaining economic value through public and private facilities design and municipal services.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Income and Assessed Valuation

An understanding of the City's role in the economy of the Coachella Valley is important to the formulation of fiscal and economic development goals, policies and programs. Per capita assessed valuation in Rancho Mirage ranks second in the Coachella Valley and is reflective of the City's image as a high end resort and residential community. The highly valued country clubs, gated communities and other residential properties, along with three first class resort hotel properties, provide the basis for the City's assessed valuation in excess of $2.7 billion. Upon incorporation in 1973, the City of Rancho Mirage chose not to collect a City property tax. The only property tax revenues received by the City's general fund are for properties annexed in recent years. As a result, the City is not dependent upon property taxes as a significant source of general fund revenue. In contrast to the general fund, however, the City's Redevelopment Agency derives a significant source of revenue from the increase in assessed valuation within one of the two Redevelopment project areas. Tax increment financing is used to implement a wide variety of Redevelopment Agency activities.

The per capita median household income in Rancho Mirage is also second highest in the Coachella Valley according to the 1990 Census. The high income level provides the purchasing power for the City's highly valued properties and for local goods and services. Many of the City's businesses are reliant upon local residents who frequently purchase their products or services.

Retail Sales

One of the economic indicators most closely associated with land use is retail sales. While commercial zoning does not necessarily produce retail sales, the proper location and amount of commercial land use designations can help capture regional and neighborhood retail activity. Although Rancho Mirage is primarily a residential community, a significant amount of retail sales tax is generated by local businesses. The City ranks third out of nine Coachella Valley cities in per capita retail sales. The average annual growth rate in retail sales in Rancho Mirage during the period 1988-1993 was 4.5%, sixth among all cities in the region. In the past restaurants and home furnishing stores produced the majority of retail sales in the City. With the recent (1993) construction of Home Depot, building materials has become the leading category of retail sales in Rancho Mirage. In order to broaden the economic base, the City may consider other economic development opportunities in other sales categories.

Resort Hotels

The three resort hotels are major features of the social, cultural and recreational setting in Rancho Mirage. Not surprisingly, resort hotels also provide the City with its largest revenue source, transient occupancy taxes. Over $4 million in "bed taxes" are estimated to be collected in FY1995-96. In 1994 Rancho Mirage ranked third in Coachella Valley cities' hotel room sales and six year average annual hotel sales growth rate. Occupancy rates for the City's three resort hotels ranged from 71-83% during the first quarter of 1994 compared to 66% for the entire Coachella Valley during the same period. In addition to the direct revenue generated by bed taxes, tourists also spend a considerable amount in local restaurants and shops.

Employment

Although Rancho Mirage is not a major employment center, Eisenhower Medical Center, Westin Mission Hills Resort, Marriott's Rancho Las Palmas, and the Ritz Carlton comprise the majority of employment in the City. Based on 1990 Census data, the number of jobs per Rancho Mirage household was only 0.76, second lowest in the Coachella Valley. This low ratio is attributable to smaller household size and a greater percentage of retirees. As the City grows, employment opportunities may occur with successful economic development efforts.

FISCAL CONDITIONS

Revenues and Expenditures

A historical listing of the City's major general fund revenue sources is presented in Table III-42. As discussed earlier, there has been a steady growth rate in the bed tax and sales tax categories. Interest income fluctuates with changes in interest rates over time. Franchise and property taxes have shown steady growth while building and planning fees, public works fees and development fees are more sensitive to the rise and fall of the real estate market. These fees are intended to offset the cost of providing building, planning, engineering and development services.

In addition to general fund revenue, the City's Redevelopment Agency received nearly $13 million in FY1994-95 tax increments. Over the last ten years, more than $80 million in tax increments has been received by the Redevelopment Agency for redevelopment and affordable housing activities. This tremendous revenue source has been instrumental in reducing the need for more general fund revenues for capital improvements in the Highway 111 corridor and other Redevelopment project areas.

City expenditures in the categories of public safety, capital projects, and cultural/recreational have a relationship with other general plan elements. Table III-43 summarizes the last ten years' expenditures in major categories, including the use of Redevelopment Agency funds. The two highest expenditure categories, capital projects and debt service, are mostly Redevelopment Agency expenditures.

Fund Balance

Private sector economic conditions in Rancho Mirage have a direct bearing on public sector fiscal conditions. Revenue sources such as sales tax and bed tax contribute to the City's general fund balance and provide for local government expenditures for services and capital improvements. As of June 30, 1995, the City's general fund balance, including receivables, totalled $19 million. This healthy fund balance is the cumulative result of annual revenues in excess of expenditures since incorporation in 1973. In the last comparison made in 1993, Rancho Mirage had the largest general fund balance of any Coachella Valley city.

Table III-42
City of Rancho Mirage Revenues

Fiscal Year	Tax Increment ($)	Transient Occupancy Tax ($)	Sales & Use Tax ($)	Other Taxes ($)	Interest ($)	Other Revenues ($)	Property Tax ($)	Total Revenues ($)
1987	5,361,362	1,384,887	1,472,136	1,973,228	2,217,223	1,581,428	$192,844	14,183,108
1988	5,856,948	1,975,243	1,551,886	3,182,125	2,527,988	1,765,544	265,230	17,124,964
1989	7,754,908	2,736,231	1,711,690	1,872,747	3,334,300	4,512,663	271,162	22,193,701
1990	8,139,772	2,444,130	1,796,955	855,950	3,541,158	2,506,886	275,588	19,560,439
1991	9,957,085	2,129,846	2,293,360	564,876	4,243,796	3,204,789	295,270	22,689,022
1992	11,389,908	3,044,050	2,047,268	1,244,315	3,731,689	6,174,886	698,430	28,330,546
1993	12,526,690	3,669,275	2,140,340	1,474,616	3,135,375	7,129,971	594,621	30,670,888
1994	13,130,444	3,745,460	2,414,527	1,203,089	2,711,696	6,099,375	1,490,047	30,794,638
1995	12,899,784	3,986,048	2,683,717	1,057,737	3,863,360	7,584,734	1,842,230	33,917,610
1996	12,174,749	4,136,521	2,931,570	1,104,519	3,963,260	8,719,044	1,582,764	34,612,427
Total	**99,191,650**	**29,251,691**	**21,043,449**	**14,533,202**	**33,269,845**	**49,279,320**	**7,508,186**	**254,077,343**

Source: City of Rancho Mirage Annual Budget

Table III-43
City of Rancho Mirage Expenditures

Fiscal Year	General Government ($)	Public Safety ($)	Public Works ($)	Cultural & Recreation ($)	Education ($)	Capital Projects ($)	Debt Service ($)	Total ($)
1987	2,306,498	2,028,172	631,777	16,905	---	14,892,272	1,417,731	21,293,355
1988	2,778,632	1,947,581	810,071	23,338	---	5,885,372	3,181,744	14,626,738
1989	4,117,053	2,086,044	1,283,772	138,067	---	9,911,055	5,283,142	22,819,133
1990	3,973,016	2,009,371	1,419,818	155,144	---	12,701,736	10,054,441	30,313,526
1991	4,251,283	2,152,166	1,999,223	169,071	---	6,366,847	5,903,214	20,841,804
1992	4,704,573	2,297,762	1,871,441	438,326	---	3,305,850	10,742,970	23,360,922
1993	5,219,844	2,616,054	1,882,424	298,924	1,589,992	10,814,068	11,710,860	34,132,166
1994	5,735,780	3,862,050	1,801,304	295,866	357,456	5,332,439	13,188,265	30,573,160
1995	6,192,714	4,112,585	2,031,978	403,652	357,541	7,888,276	11,193,600	32,180,346
1996	6,757.455	4,227,904	2,218,709	944,637	---	14,280,580	13,756,691	42,185,976
Total	**46,036,848**	**27,339,689**	**15,950,517**	**2,883,930**	**2,304,989**	**91,378,495**	**86,432,658**	**272,327,126**

Source: City of Rancho Mirage Annual Budget Document

The City's large fund balance is a product of the application of past policies, most of which have been embodied in the General Plan. For example, the policies promoting gated communities with private homeowner associations have resulted in relatively low demands for certain municipal services. Approximately 2,000 acres in the City are developed as private or gated residential communities compared with approximately 550 acres developed in ungated, non-private residential areas. Consistent with the policies favoring private communities, the City has established a set of high quality development regulations which promote and support the high end residential and commercial developments which contribute to City revenues. Likewise, the policies supporting the three resort hotels has led to the direct and indirect revenues associated with tourism in Rancho Mirage. The City's policy that new development pay for or install public facilities that are needed to accommodate the impact from development is another example. These developer fees and exactions have relieved the City and its existing residents and businesses from paying for public facilities needed to accommodate growth.

Long Range Fiscal Projections

Each year the City prepares a ten year financial projection to provide a long range estimate of the City's financial strength. This process involves establishing realistic revenue and expenditure assumptions, including capital improvement needs, and calculating the resulting annual fund balances. The ten year projection can be used as a planning tool to identify potential fiscal problems and their solutions. This progressive approach of long range fiscal planning has enabled the City to make revenue or expenditure corrections long before fund balance problems arise. As a part of this exercise, the City has established a goal of maintaining a fund balance equal to or greater than one year's operating expenditures. This fund balance goal provides a prudent reserve in the event of a natural or economic disaster. The ten year financial model also includes an assumption that capital improvements will continue to be funded at an increasing level to maintain and enhance the City's infrastructure.

The City's most recent ten year projection indicates that if past growth, revenue and expenditure increases are carried forward at their historical rates, the City will maintain its strong financial position and meet its prudent reserve goal. The financial model assumes that existing land use patterns, development standards and financial policies will also remain in place. In order to further improve the City's projected fund balance, a second development scenario has been incorporated into the ten year model. This scenario includes the eventual sale and development of the Monterey Marketplace on City property at Dinah Shore Drive and Monterey Avenue.

The City's financial situation would be significantly improved by the development of the Monterey Marketplace. In a similar way, economic development efforts to further promote retail and resort development can have a considerably positive fiscal benefit to the City. Given the luxury of a large existing and projected fund balance, the City can be selective in the type of economic development projects pursued in Rancho Mirage.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City's previous economic development plans have focused on certain target businesses such as restaurants and home furnishing stores. These businesses have succeeded in the past and have helped to create the retail base and image of Rancho Mirage along Highway 111. Redevelopment incentive programs have been established to include all public improvements along Highway 111 and other incentives for targeted businesses. The City's economic development posture was more passive than active. With the recession in the 1991-1995 period, economic development incentives in Rancho Mirage had little effect.

Although the City's financial position is sound and additional revenue sources are not desperately needed, an aggressive economic development program can further insure against future economic slowdowns. Moreover, the redevelopment of the Highway 111 corridor for both aesthetic and economic purposes demands a more active approach to overcome some of the physical and property ownership constraints that exist. To achieve this objective on Highway 111 and other areas, a broader range of prospective businesses should be entertained.

The preparation and adoption of the updated General Plan provides an opportune time for embarking on an active economic development program. The shared visions and policies coming from the General Plan process will provide fresh direction for economic development strategies. Selected market studies, revised economic development incentive programs, a City office of economic development and the retention and recruitment of targeted businesses and industries may be incorporated in a new economic development program.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Policies and programs for the City's fiscal management and economic development should be closely integrated with land use, community design and public facilities elements of the General Plan. The past strengths of Rancho Mirage's economic base should be used as a basis for future policy direction. To take advantage of new opportunities in the changing economy, the City should achieve a better balance of residential, commercial and industrial designations while maintaining its high standards of design and development. Continued long range fiscal planning will keep the City ahead of evolving problems and opportunities. Finally, an aggressive economic development program will improve the chances of attracting and retaining a high quality of business in Rancho Mirage.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A growing and balanced economic base which serves the needs of Rancho Mirage residents, businesses and visitors while maintaining the City's high standards of development and environmental protection.

GOAL 2

A prudent and progressive financial management program to maintain and enhance the City's strong fiscal position.

Policy 1
The City's land use designations shall provide opportunities for a broad range of residential, commercial, office, institutional and light industrial development in appropriate locations.

Program 1.A
The City shall monitor the remaining capacity of all General Plan land use categories to assure that a variety of economic development opportunities are available to the private sector.

Policy 2
The City may require market studies to justify requests for rezoning to a higher intensity of land use.

Policy 3
The City shall take a proactive and aggressive role in the retention of existing businesses and the recruitment of new businesses in Rancho Mirage.

Program 3.A
The City shall establish an economic development entity to develop and administer an economic development program.

Policy 4
The City's economic development program shall be consistent with other adopted General Plan land use and community design policies.

Policy 5
Promote the development of a central place of activity to enhance the economic vitality of the Highway 111 corridor.

Policy 6
Redevelopment funds may be used to support economic development activities along Highway 111 and other redevelopment project areas.

Policy 7
Promote the development of medically-related uses in the vicinity of the Eisenhower Medical Center.

Policy 8
The City shall maintain a prudent reserve of general funds equivalent to one year's operating expenses.

Program 8.A
The City shall regularly prepare a long range financial projection and evaluate its implications for maintaining the City's strong fiscal position.

Policy 9
The City shall provide capital improvements funding at a level sufficient to maintain and expand needed public facilities.

Policy 10
New development shall pay for its fair share of public facilities needed to accommodate growth.

Program 10.A
The City shall review and revise as needed its development fees, taxes and exactions required to mitigate the impact of growth.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

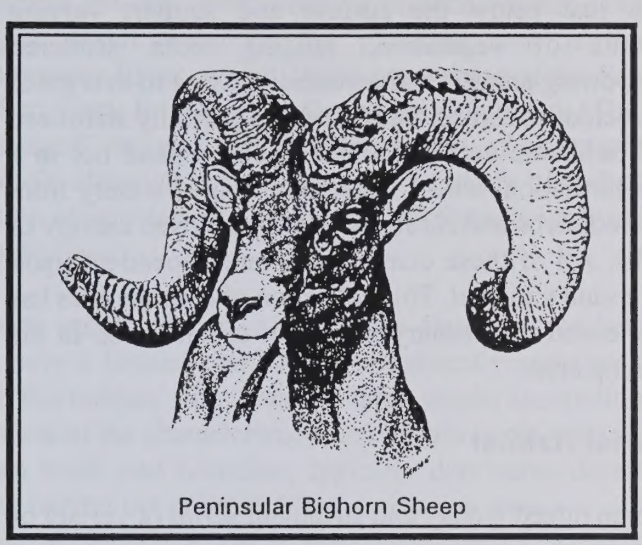
COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER IV

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

This chapter of the General Plan discusses the environmental resources of the City and surrounding areas. The elements addressed in this chapter include Biological Resources, Archaeological and Historic Resources, Water Resources, Air Quality, Open Space and Conservation, and Energy and Mineral Resources. The City of Rancho Mirage has substantial environmental resources which contribute to the quality of life for City residents and attract a significant tourist trade. This chapter addresses the importance of and need for conservation of these valued resources.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ELEMENT



Peninsular Bighorn Sheep

PURPOSE

The Biological Resources Element identifies the important and valuable biological resources occurring within Rancho Mirage and surrounding area. It also establishes goals, policies and programs to utilize and conserve these resources for the benefit of the entire community. The Element is intended to provide a basis for understanding biological resource issues, and references other sources of information that guide decision makers in regulating land use and development, while protecting these critical community resources.

BACKGROUND

The Biological Resources Element has a direct and vital relationship with the Land Use Element, as well as the Open Space and Conservation and Community Design Elements. It is also related to Arts and Culture and Parks and Recreation Elements, reflecting the community's enjoyment of and commitment to its wildlife resources. Local biological resources have also proven important market assets for Rancho Mirage, which has adopted a wildlife icon, the Peninsular Bighorn, as its community image. In this regard, the Biological Resources Element may influence and contribute to the effective implementation of conservation, community design and economic development goals, policies and programs.

California Government Code Section 65302(d) requires that the General Plan include an element that addresses the conservation or preservation of wildlife resources. It also requires that the element and supporting documentation provide inventories of natural vegetation, fish and wildlife and their habitat, including rare and endangered species. Consistent with requirements, this element includes goals, policies and programs, as well as plans and resource maps showing areas important to the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species, and areas required for ecological and scientific study purposes. Programs which act to assure the preservation of biological resources are also included.

The city limits and the Sphere-of-Influence (SOI) include lands owned and/or managed by the City, state and federal agencies. The combination of a valley basin with expansive and varying geography and habitats, and the complexity of various habitat transition zones, makes the region a rich resource area. The community and the vicinity comprise one of the most biologically unique and diverse regions in the country (see Exhibit IV-1).

Rancho Mirage is located at the northwestern extension of the Salton Trough and the Colorado subunit of the Sonoran Desert. The San Jacinto, San Bernardino and Santa Rosa Mountains effectively isolate the greater Coachella Valley region from the moderating coastal influences to the west. As a result, the City is located in one of the hottest and driest parts of the country. Distinguished by its low elevation, mild winters and extreme aridity, only Death Valley is subject to more extreme conditions.

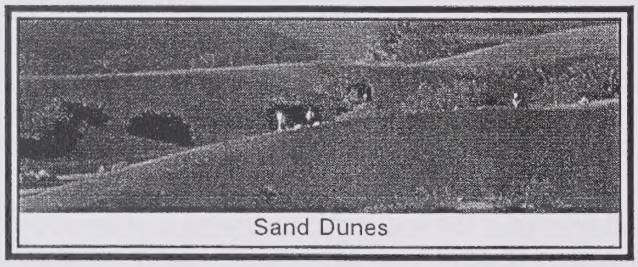
Yet while the desert floor supports sparse vegetation limited by heat and aridity, the climate of the City and region becomes milder with increasing elevation and supports more vegetation, including as many as nine species of cacti, a variety of woody plants such as palo verde and smoke tree, and many herbaceous plants. Canyons and springs support native fan palm communities and a wide variety of other plants and animals. The various habitat types supported in Rancho Mirage and their importance are briefly discussed below.

In the City of Rancho Mirage and surrounding lands, and within the context of the General Plan, the Biological Resource Element plays a pivotal role in defining the character of the community. The varied and unique geographic and geophysical conditions have created an environment for many diverse and occasionally highly specialized communities of plants and animals, occupying equally varied ecological niches.

DEFINITION OF HABITAT

Biological resources are found in and are integral parts of a habitat, an ecological system or network of interrelationships between living things. Habitat values are controlled by tolerable climate, a varied terrain, adequate space, a dependable food and water supply, soils for healthy plant growth, and shelter and nesting sites. An animal may live across habitat lines to meet all of its needs.

Valley Floor/Blowsand Habitats


Sand Dunes

In the planning area, the valley floor generally extends from the foot of Edom Hill to the toe of the Santa Rosa Mountains foothills and is dominated by habitats comprised of shifting, windblown sand supporting sparse vegetation. Three separate sub-communities comprise these habitat within the planning area: active sand dunes (Edom Hill and north and south of Interstate-10), stabilized and partially stabilized sand dunes (south of Interstate-10), and stabilized and partially stabilized desert sand fields (south to the Whitewater River). Often referred to as aeolian or blowsand habitats, they are critical to a number of special-status wildlife and plant species, including the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard, the flat-tailed horned lizard, flat-seeded spurge and the Coachella Valley milk-vetch. Typical plants include creosote bush, sand verbena, dune primrose, and narrow-leafed forget-me-not.

While active desert dunes can be described as areas of actively moving sand with little or no vegetation, stabilized and partially stabilized desert dunes retain water just below the surface and support varying amounts of vegetation, ranging from scattered low-growing annuals and perennial grasses to evergreen and deciduous shrubs. Stabilized and partially stabilized sand fields are accumulations of desert sand not in a dune formation, where vegetation ranges widely from scattered herbs and shrubs to nearly enclosed canopy of shrubs. All of these communities are dependent upon active sand transport. This collection of communities has experienced the primary impact of urbanization in the planning area.

Alluvial Habitat

Sonoran mixed woody and succulent scrub (a variant of the creosote scrub community) is the dominant plant community on flood-formed fans and bajadas which extend from canyon mouths to the desert floor. In the planning area, these alluvial habitats are formed by a variety of mountain drainages, including Magnesia Springs Canyon, Bradley Canyon and smaller canyons forming alluvial fans, terraces and washes. The surface and habitat conditions change on these sloping plains with increasing distance from canyon mouths.

Plants of alluvial plain habitats are typical of the Colorado Desert and include creosote bush joined by nine species of cacti and a variety of woody and herbaceous plants. The roughly 93 species of annuals occurring here can make up more than half of the alluvial slopes flora. Cacti are one of the most striking of the alluvial slopes' plants, ranging from flat-stemmed species such as of the beavertail cactus to the thin and intricately branched pencil cholla. Other cactus occurring here include barrel cactus, jumping cholla, deerhorn cholla, golden cholla, hedgehog cactus, and two varieties of fishhook cactus. Shrubs and sub-shrubs in this community include brittlebush or encilia, burrobush, desert mallow, indigo bush, jojoba, and desert lavender. Larger woody shrubs also occurring here include the palo verde.

Desert Dry Wash/Habitat

As with alluvial plain habitat, the planning area has limited desert wash areas remaining to support plants

and wildlife dependent on or associated with these habitat. As washes emerge from canyon mouths they cut a channel into the alluvial slope, which broadens and branches out into intertwined or braided washes. The largest desert wash in the planning area is the Whitewater River, which drains large areas of the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and San Bernardino Mountains. This "managed" drainage still harbors a variety of plants and wildlife, although habitat areas are regularly disturbed and/or eliminated in the course of periodic channel maintenance.

A wide variety of species occupy the desert dry washes, but only a limited number are consistently associated with this habitat, with trees and large shrubs accounting for most of the characteristic species. Palo verde, with its green trunk and branches, typically dominates desert wash habitat but is limited in the planning area.

Smoketree, a member of the pea family, is more common and has been encouraged in areas scoured by storm runoff. Honey mesquite and cat's claw are also common in these habitats. Common shrubs and sub-shrubs include chuperosa, cheesebush, sweetbush, desert lavender, dyeweed, sandpaper plant and bladderpod. The absence of certain shallow rooted species, particularly cacti, is due to their easy removal by stormwaters and their slow growth rate and reestablishment.

Desert Fan Palm Oasis Woodland

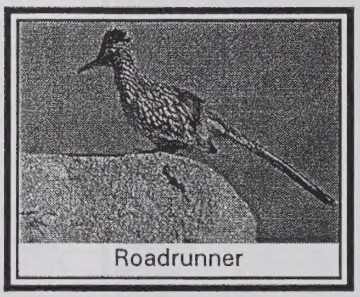
The desert fan palm oasis woodland is a plant community that has been given special status by the State as one with the highest inventory priority. It is characterized by open to dense groves of native desert fan palms (Washingtonia filifera) that can grow to more than 90 feet. Within the planning area, only one example of this plant community occurs within Magnesia Springs Canyon, a portion of which is owned by the California Department of Fish and Game and is managed as a biological preserve (see below). Other species expected to be found in association with the fan palm oasis include arrowweed, willows, rushes and mulefat.

A variety of wildlife are also associated with the desert fan palm community, including the southern yellow bat, common kingsnake, desert slender salamander, California treefrog, hooded oriole, Cooper's hawk, golden eagle, prairie falcon, Least Bell's vireo, common flicker, carpenter bee and the giant palm boring beetle. This large beetle is responsible for the majority of the damage to these woodlands. One of the most important animals supported by this habitat is the Peninsular Bighorn, which visits, especially during the summer months, to take advantage of the water source supporting the woodland.

The vegetation found on these rocky slopes is a variant of Sonoran Desert Creosote Bush Scrub, blending with Sonoran Mixed-Woody and Succulent Scrub.

Rocky Slopes Habitat

Rocky slope habitats occurring within and near the planning area are associated with the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains and extend from the edge of alluvial plains to an elevation of about 2,500 feet. The habitat is typified by unrelieved rock, weathered and fractured as exposed bedrock and ranging to broken and displaced material as loose debris of stone, pebbles and sand. While vegetation appears deceivingly sparse, this habitat supports up to 102 perennials and 115 annual species. Plant size and densities increase with elevation and associated increases in annual rainfall.


Roadrunner

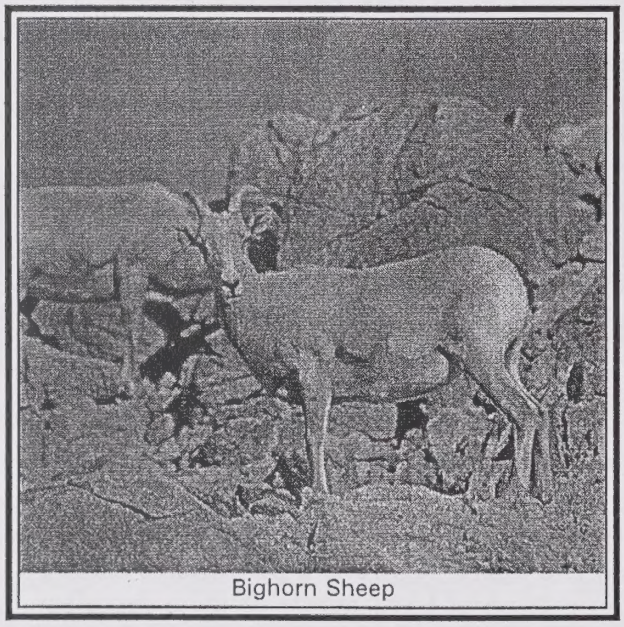
Common perennials include creosote bush, brittlebush, burrobush and agave. Agave is a particularly striking plant with a compact basal rosette of large succulent leaves which send up a single central flower-bearing stalk that bears yellow flowers and can reach a height of more than 20 feet. Flowers are produced only once in the plant's life, which dies soon after flowering. Ocotillo are also common in this habitat, as are spike moss, Parry's cloak fern, arrowleaf, pigmy cedar, bushy cryptantha, bedstraw, rush pea and crossosoma.

The tall ocotillo is a special plant with a unique growth form, with unusual branched stems topped by bright red flower bracts once and sometimes twice a year. Annuals may occur in an unevenly distributed pattern; those of the greatest relative abundance include wooly plantain, crenulate phacelia, rock daisy and cryptantha. A wide

variety of other annuals occur in unique and condition-specific areas within the rocky slope habitat.

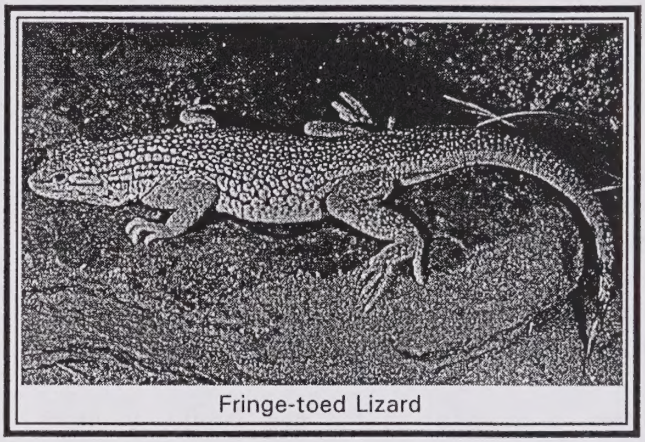
Sensitive, Rare and Endangered Species

The Rancho Mirage General Plan study area is host to a wide variety of sensitive plant and animal species, some of which have been listed as threatened or endangered by the federal and state governments. Animals listed as "threatened" are those whose numbers have dropped to such low levels, and/or whose populations are so isolated that the continuation of the species could be jeopardized. "Endangered" species are those with such limited numbers or subject to extreme circumstances that the extinction is a real possibility.The following table lists some of the sensitive species known or likely to occur within the planning area.



Bighorn Sheep

Both "rare" and "sensitive" species are those determined less sensitive to impacts to their numbers, and where perpetuation does not appear significantly threatened. The Biological Resources Sensitive Elements Map (Exhibit IV-2) identifies sensitive plant communities and wildlife species known to occur within the City and study area.



Fringe-toed Lizard

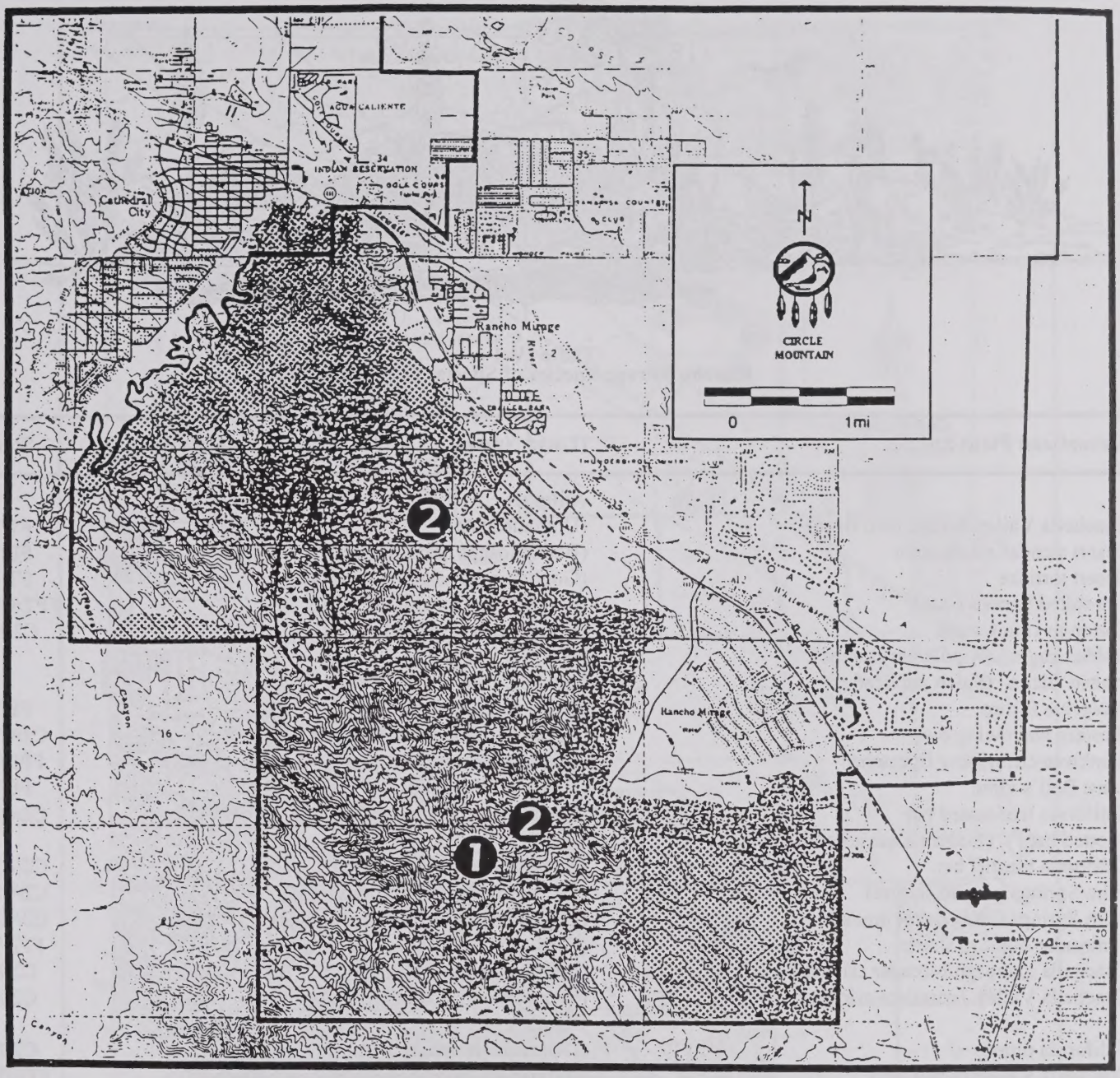


Figure 5. Rancho Mirage General Plan: Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Habitat and Associated Areas (See text for details)

❶ Palm Oasis

❷ Water Sources

Lambing Area

Vital Habitat

Primary Habitat

Secondary Habitat

Deficiency Area

Habitat information taken from *Santa Rosa Mountains Wildlife Management Plan (1980)*
Map Source: USGS 7.5' Rancho Mirage and Cathedral City quadrangles

Exhibit IV-1

Prepared by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants February 1996

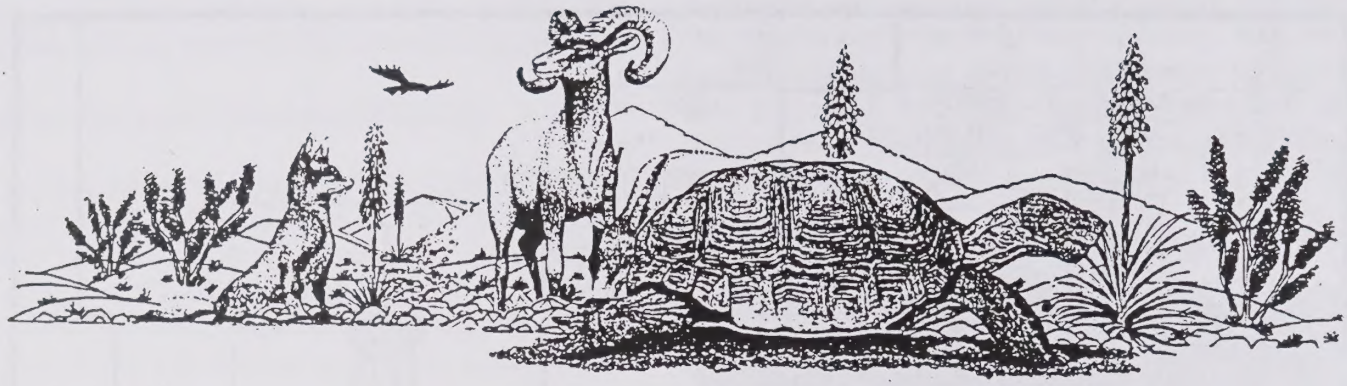


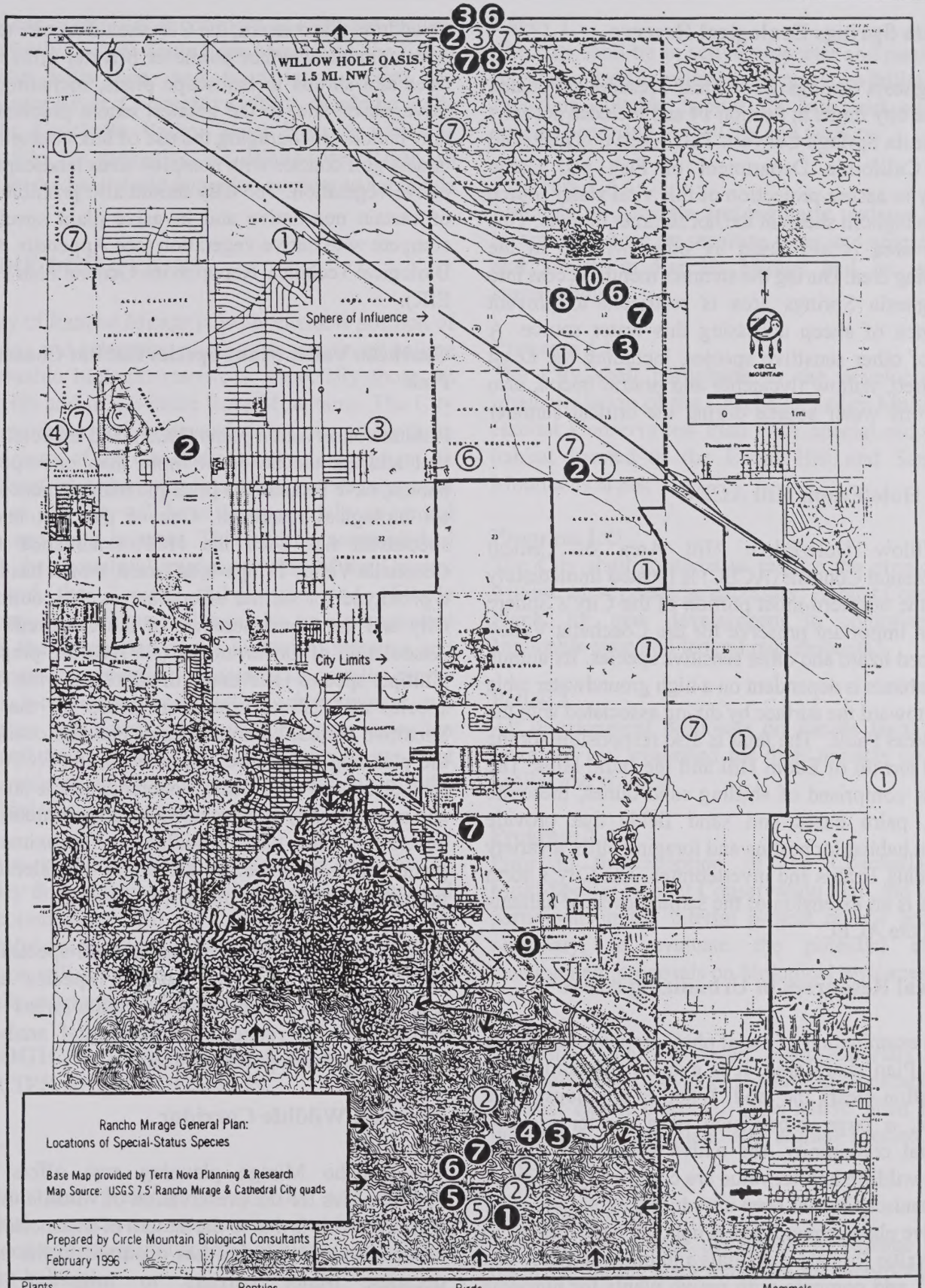
Table IV-1
Rancho Mirage Species of Special Concern[1]

Animal and Plant Species	(Latin Name)	Status
	Animals	
Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard	(Uma inornata)	FT/SE
Desert slender salamander	(Batrachoseps aridus)	FE/SE
Desert tortoise	(Gopherus agassizii)	FT/ST
Flat-tailed horned lizard	(Phrynosoma mcallii)	FPT/CSC
Common chuckwalla	(Sauromalus obesus)	C2/ND
Golden eagle (Aquila/chrysaetos)	ND/CSC	
Prairie falcon (Falco mexicanus)	ND/CSC	
Peregrine falcon	(Falco peregrinatus)	FE/SE
Western burrowing owl	(Speotyto cunicularia hypugea)	C2/CSC
Southwestern willow flycatcher	(Empidonax trailii extimus)	FPE/SE
Least Bell's vireo	(Vireo bellii pusillus)	FE/SE
California leaf-nosed bat	(Macrotis californicus)	C2/CSC
Spotted bat (Euderma maculatum)	C2/CSC	
California mastiff bat	(Eumops perotis californicus)	C2/CSC
Palm Springs ground squirrel	(Spermophilus tereticaudus)	C2/CSC
Palm Springs little pocket mouse	(Onychomys torridus ssp. ramona)	C2/CSC
Peninsular bighorn sheep	(Ovis canadensis cremnobates)	FPE/ST
Coachella giant sand-treader cricket	(Macrobaenetes valgum)	C2/ND
Coachella Valley Jerusalem cricket	(Stenopelmatus cahuilaensis)	C2/ND
	Plants	
California ditaxis	(Ditaxis californica)	C2/ND
Coachella Valley milk-vetch	(Astragalus lentiginosus var. coachellae)	FPE/ND
Flat-seeded spurge	(Chamaesyce platysperma)	C2/ND
Payson's jewelflower	(Caulanthus simulans)	C2/ND

Status Definitions:

FE: Federally listed as "Endangered"
FPE: Federally proposed or petitioned as "Endangered"
SE: State listed as "Endangered"
CSC: California Species of Special Concern
FT: Federally listed as "Threatened"
ST: State listed as "Threatened"
ND: Species not designated
C2: Category 2 Candidate Species for which information currently being collected for listing review

[1]1Please see the General Plan EIR and Associated Biological Resource Assessment for a comprehensive listing of sensitive species and communities.


WILLOW HOLE OASIS,
≈ 1.5 MI. NW
Sphere of Influence →
City Limits →
CIRCLE MOUNTAIN
0
1mi
Rancho Mirage General Plan:
Locations of Special-Status Species
Base Map provided by Terra Nova Planning & Research
Map Source: USGS 7.5' Rancho Mirage & Cathedral City quads
Prepared by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants
February 1996
Plants
① Coachella Valley Milk-vetch
② Glandular Ditaxis
Invertebrates
③ Coachella Valley Giant Sand-treader Cricket
④ Coachella Valley Jerusalem Cricket
Reptiles
⑤ Common Chuckwalla
⑮ Flat-tailed Horned Lizard
⑦ Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard
Birds
❶ Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
❷ LeConte's Thrasher
❸ Loggerhead Shrike
❹ Black-tailed Gnatcatcher
❻ Prairie Falcon
❼ Cooper's Hawk
❽ Burrowing Owl
❺ Golden Eagle
Mammals
❾ Pallid Bat
⑮ Roundtailed Ground Squirrel
→ Bighorn Sheep Habitat
(See Figure 5 for more detail)

Magnesia Springs Ecological Reserve

The Magnesia Springs Ecological Preserve is located within the city limits in Section 14 and includes portions of Magnesia Springs Canyon. This reserve is managed by the California Department of Fish and Game primarily to assure protection of this vital water source critical to bighorn sheep in the hot summer months. This resource area is also used by other wildlife in the surrounding area. During the summer months access into the Magnesia Springs area is restricted to prevent disturbance of sheep accessing this water source. A variety of other sensitive species, including the Least Bell's vireo, willow flycatcher and prairie falcon, also rely on this water source during the critical summer months.

Willow Hole/Edom Hill ACEC

The Willow Hole/Edom Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is located immediately west of the northern-most portion of the City's Sphere and is an important preserve for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard and other sensitive species. Its unique mix of habitats is dependent on a high groundwater table directed toward the surface by diking associated with the San Andreas Fault. The fault is also responsible for the elevated terrain of Edom Hill and the Indio Hills. The ACEC is comprised of shifting sand dunes, mesquite thickets, palm oases and sand fields that provide important habitat for nesting and foraging birds, a variety of mammals, lizards and invertebrates. The City's north SOI area is an extension of the same blowsand habitats found in the ACEC.

Biological Resources in Urbanizing Areas

From an examination of aerial photographs taken of the General Plan study area, it is evident that almost all urbanization clears the land. Whether one house on a large lot, a large subdivision or a master planned residential community, the native vegetation and its inherent wildlife habitat value are completely removed. Where landscaping has been introduced, exotic and other non-native plants prevail. These not only have little or no habitat value for native animals and birds, but they can "escape" and compete with native plants for nutrients and water in the wild.

To address this concern, the City should require that new development, whether public or private, utilize native trees and shrubs in landscape plans, including plants salvaged on-site, to the greatest extent practical. This may include encouraging the use of link course designs in new golf courses with non-play areas landscaped with native vegetation. The City should also prohibit the use of certain non-native and invasive plant species that compete with native vegetation (see Appendix A of the Biological Technical Report in the General Plan Program EIR).

Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan

Habitat conservation plans (HCP), and especially those that address the needs of more than one species or habitat, have become the principle management strategy for biological resources. One of the first and most successful has been the HCP established for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard, which has become a prototype for similar efforts across the country. The City and the other members of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) are preparing a multiple species HCP that will address a wide range of species and habitat protection issues for the region. Sensitive natural communities or habitats occurring in the planning area to be addressed in the HCP include sand dunes and sand fields, Sonoran creosote bush scrub and mixed woody and succulent scrub communities, and desert fan palm oasis woodlands. Approximately 50 plant and animal species are under consideration for protection through the multi-species HCP.

As addressed in a comprehensive multi-species habitat plan, the protection of sensitive species and the establishment of habitat preservation areas can be facilitated with reduced environmental analysis for subsequent development projects.

Regional Wildlife Corridor

The Rancho Mirage planning area offers limited opportunities for the preservation of wildlife migration corridors. This is due to the pattern of transportation and urban development that has occurred in the past few decades. Major barriers to migration include development in the southern portion of the City, as well as State Highway 111 and Interstate-10 construction.

Several east-west wildlife corridors do exist and include the relatively pristine Santa Rosa Mountains, the Edom Hill/Indio Hills area, and to a lesser extent the Whitewater River. Cooperative efforts should be made with the Coachella Valley Water District, which is responsible for managing the Whitewater River, to maximize the habitat and migration corridor value of this area.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City of Rancho Mirage is in the enviable position of preserving and enhancing much of its remaining unique and valuable biologic resources, especially those on Edom Hill and in the Santa Rosa Mountains. The City and its residents have evidenced strong support for these integral parts of the Coachella Valley environment. In every facet of community planning and development regulation, the City will have the opportunity to control growth and limit impacts. This will be accomplished through the thoughtful implementation of the General Plan, and the Zoning, Subdivision and Hillside Development Ordinances. It can also be accomplished through the integration of the biological resource and open space/conservation principles in public works projects, including road and highway development, and the design and construction of stormwater detention basins and drainage basins. Development on every level will provide an opportunity to protect and enhance the City's biological resources.

It must be recognized that as development continues on the valley floor and on alluvial slopes, native habitat and plant communities will be converted to urban uses. Thoughtful development and the reintroduction of native vegetation will support only a few of the native animals originally supported by these lands.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Protection and preservation of City and regional biological resources, especially sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered species of plants and wildlife and their habitats.

Policy 1
The City shall be an active supporter and participant in regional efforts to evaluate and protect wildlife habitats, including suitable habitat for rare and endangered species occurring in the City and vicinity.

Program 1.A
Maintain an accurate and regularly updated map and information base on sensitive plant and animal species and habitat in Rancho Mirage and its immediate surroundings.

Program 1.B
The City shall participate in the development and implementation of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan with special emphasis on habitat located in the Edom Hill and Santa Rosa Mountains areas.

Program 1.C
The City shall continue to require the preparation of wildlife surveys and, as necessary, Habitat Conservation Plans, for new development in compliance with applicable state and federal requirements.

Policy 2
All development proposals on vacant lands shall be reviewed and evaluated for their impacts on existing habitat and wildlife.

Program 2.A
Prior to the adoption of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, the City shall participate in the interim project review process, as necessary, to evaluate the potential effect of development proposals on biological resources.

Policy 3
Naturally occurring desert plant materials shall be incorporated into development project landscaping to the greatest extent possible. Non-native plant materials harmful to native plant and animal species shall be discouraged.

Program 3.A
City shall encourage developers to salvage naturally occurring desert plant materials for incorporation into project landscaping to the greatest extent possible and indicate utilization of these indigenous materials on project landscape plans, which provide or enhance

wildlife habitat and serve to extend the local desert environment into the urban design of the City. Plans shall be submitted to the City for approval.

Program 3.B
The City shall prepare a comprehensive planting materials list, which shall include native and non-native, drought tolerant trees, shrubs and groundcovers that complement the local environment, provide habitat for local wildlife, and extend the desert into the built environment. A list of prohibited plant materials shall also be prepared.

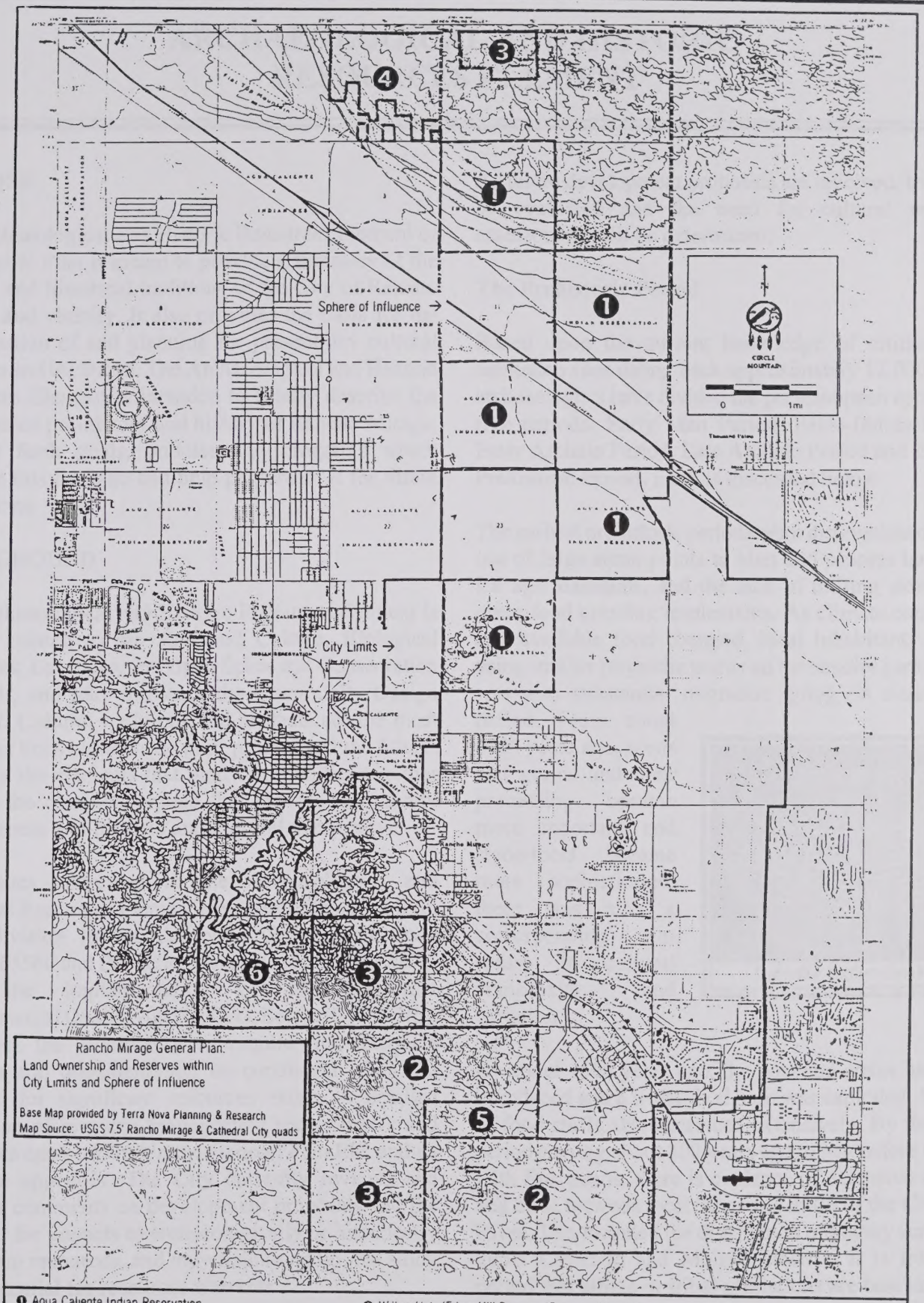
Policy 4
Sensitive habitat and wildlife areas shall be buffered from urban development.

Policy 5
Cooperate in the establishment of multiple use corridors that use drainage channels and utility easements to provide wildlife corridors and public interconnection between open space areas in the community and vicinity.

Program 5.A
The City shall investigate the feasibility and appropriateness of establishing an interpretive trail system in the City's mountain preserve or other similar area to enhance the public's appreciation for the City's natural resources.

Policy 6
Pro-actively encourage and promote an appreciation of sensitive biological resources found in the planning area and vicinity.

Program 6.A
Provide developers direction and information on preservation and re-use of valuable top soils, and use of locally appropriate xeriscape design concepts; and discourage unnecessary clearing of native desert landscape.


Sphere of Influence →
City Limits →
CIRCLE MOUNTAIN
0
1mi
Rancho Mirage General Plan:
Land Ownership and Reserves within
City Limits and Sphere of Influence
Base Map provided by Terra Nova Planning & Research
Map Source: USGS 7.5' Rancho Mirage & Cathedral City quads
❶ Agua Caliente Indian Reservation
❷ California Department of Fish and Game
❸ Bureau of Land Management
Lands not otherwise marked are in private ownership
❹ Willow Hole/Edom Hill Reserve (Bureau of Land Management)
❺ Magnesia Springs Ecological Reserve
❻ City of Rancho Mirage
Prepared by Circle Mountain Biological Consultants
February 1996

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Archaeological and Historic Resources Element of the General Plan is meant to provide a summary of the cultural and historical traditions of the City of Rancho Mirage and vicinity. It also provides the basis for the identification of and planning for present-day cultural activities and traditions. The Archaeological and Historic Resources Element is intended to briefly describe the documented pre-history and history of Rancho Mirage, and set forth goals, policies and programs which preserve this heritage and help perpetuate it for future generations.

BACKGROUND

The Archaeological and Historic Resources Element is directly related to the Arts and Culture, Biological Resources, Land Use, and Open Space and Conservation Elements, and may influence the Community Design Element. Cultural traditions and artifacts are the most important links between the past, present and the future. They are the elements that bind communities together and are the common ground that provide community cohesiveness and historic and cultural perspective.

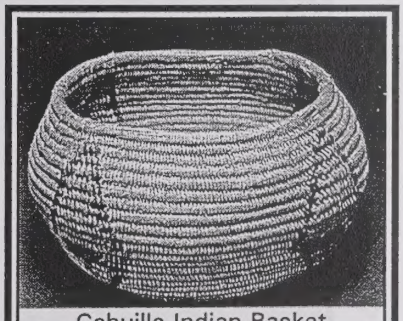
The issues addressed in the Archaeological and Historical Resources Element are a part of those set forth in subdivision (b) of California Government Code Section 65560 and Public Resources Code Section 5076. Also, the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 21083.2(g), empowers the community to require that adequate research and documentation be conducted when the potential for significant resources exists. A detailed discussion of resource management requirements and guidelines can be found in the General Plan EIR and its technical appendix. The City currently reviews and provides comments on development proposals and the potential for impacts to archaeologically or historically significant resources, and may require additional study if the potential for resources warrants.

As future development proposals are received, they will be evaluated and the need for cultural resource assessments will be determined.

The Prehistoric Period

Based upon the current knowledge of artifacts and habitation sites dating back approximately 12,000 years, archaeologists have divided the pre-European epoch into five periods: Early Man Period, Paleo-Indian Period, Early Archaic Period, Late Archaic Period and the Late Prehistoric Period. Each is discussed below.

The earliest prehistoric periods were distinguished by the use of large stone points to hunt and process large late ice age mammals, and the lack of milling stones and other food grinding implements. As climate conditions and available food changed, local inhabitants started using smaller projectile points on the smaller game; there was also substantial migration going on during this period. From about 4000 years ago, seeds and grains and their processing became more important, and stone-tools became more sophisticated; there was also a corresponding increase in cultural complexity and variation.


Cahuilla Indian Basket

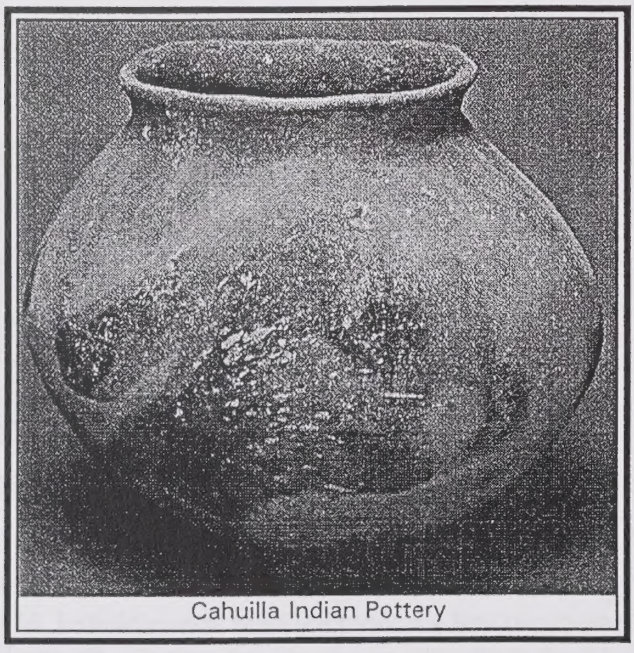
By about 1500 years ago, the bow and arrow had been introduced and a wider food base was exploited. Milling of food stuffs also continued extensively. By the latest period starting about 800 years ago to just before contact with Europeans, there is evidence of extensive contact and trade between local tribes and those of the Colorado River. This included the distribution of pottery across the upper Colorado and Mojave Deserts. It is from this period that ethnic or tribal affiliations are best known.

In the Rancho Mirage area, the oldest cultural remains date back about 1500 years and are located in the Anza Borrego Indian Hill Rock Shelter (also see General Plan EIR). The oldest radiocarbon dated occupation in the Coachella Valley comes from the intersection of Washington Street and Highway 111, a site known as Point Happy. The artifact was a Patayan-style broken pot that dated to about 900 years ago.

Numerous types of habitation and village sites developed throughout the area. These included villages occupied for extended periods of time, milling sites used seasonally as particular foods become available, lithic workshops and quarries for making stone tools and weapons, and rock art sites that were used for artistic/religious expression.

Cahuilla Culture In Historic Times

The Desert Cahuilla are the most recent identifiable native culture to evolve in the Coachella Valley region.



Cahuilla Indian Pottery

They are generally divided into three groups: the Pass Cahuilla of the Banning-Beaumont area; the Mountain Cahuilla from the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains; and the Desert Cahuilla from the Coachella Valley as far south as today's Salton Sea. Rather than identified by a single name, membership was in terms of lineage or clans.

Individual clans had defined territories they called their own and used for hunting and gathering food and other resource necessities. The population prior to European contact is estimated to have ranged from 3,600 to 10,000. During the 1800's, however, the Cahuilla population was decimated by European disease, most notably smallpox, against which the Native peoples had no immunity. The Desert Cahuilla had many villages throughout the Coachella Valley, including those associated with Ancient Lake Cahuilla until its last occurrence 500 years ago. With the lake's disappearance the mountains and canyons became more important sources of water, food and fiber. Today, the Cahuilla Indian population closest to the planning area lives on the Agua Caliente Reservation, portions of which are located within the incorporated city limits and Sphere-of-Influence.

Known Local Prehistoric Resource Areas

A large number of cultural resource surveys have been conducted in and near the General Plan study area. Recorded significant archaeological resources are generally identified by a tri-nomial designation given the site by the Eastern Information Center (EIC) at the Archaeological Research Unit at the University of California at Riverside. All or most prehistoric sites identified in the General Plan study area have been recorded by the EIC and include information on prehistoric and historic sites and resources.

Magnesia Springs

The most significant and obvious pattern emerging from the archaeological record is a dense clustering of native American archaeological sites in the Magnesia Springs cove, including at the mouth of the springs and on the alluvial fan. Recent site surveys in this area have revealed 17 recorded sites, including pottery scatters, grinding rocks, trail segments, and rock cairn features. The sites indicate extensive use of the cove area prior to European settlement. Of particular interest are potentially significant rock cairn alignments, similar to those found in other nearby canyon/alluvial fan areas, that warrant further research and analysis.

Santa Rosa Mountains

A limited number of resource surveys have been prepared in the Santa Rosa Mountains in the vicinity of

the planning area. While trails have been identified, the areas of the Santa Rosas most likely to harbor resources are those with water and/or substantial vegetation. Surrounding surveys indicate that these mountain areas have high potential resource value, but additional information is needed for it to be adequately characterized. The same conclusions are generally drawn regarding the cultural resource value of Edom Hill and the Indio Hills. With more limited water and wildlife resources in this area, cultural resources are expected to occur less; however, inadequate information is currently available.

Cahuilla Cultural Heritage Sites

One of the best compilation of records of Cahuilla cultural heritage sites is The Cahuilla Landscape: The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains, by Lowell John Bean, Sylvia Brakke Vane, and Jackson Young. A total of six such sites have been identified within the city limits and one in the SOI. Several others occur adjacent to or near the planning area. The following lists a few of these sites and their Cahuilla names; also, please see the General Plan EIR and its technical appendices for more detailed information on these and other cultural resources.

Bradley Canyon Trail	Magnesia Spring (Pah-wah'-te)
Edom Hill/Indio Hills (Pa hal ke on a)	Bradley Canyon (Tanki?)

The Historic Period

Historically significant sites are generally more than forty-five to fifty years of age, but range from the period of the earliest European contacts, around the end of the 1700's to about the end of World War II. Types of potentially significant sites range from permanent trails and highways to living areas and small-scale remains of single activities. The following discusses the historic period and also identifies significant historical resources.

Earliest European History of the Rancho Mirage Region

The Rancho Mirage region was first explored by Spaniards making forays northward from Mexico along the coast and the Colorado River. Tradition has it that a Captain Juan Iturbe sailed a vessel into the Salton Sea and explored westerly as far as the Santa Rosa and Little San Bernardino Mountains area. No concrete evidence has been located to document this story. The earliest documented period of Spanish influence began in 1769 when explorers moved into what was then referred to as Upper California to establish a military, political and religious foothold. The development of land routes to supply inland missions brought the Spanish into the region in the 1770's.

Mexican and Post Mexican-American War Periods

In 1821, although there is no historical evidence of settlements in the Rancho Mirage area, the region fell under the influence of Mexico, as it secured its independence from Spain under the Treaty of Cordova. The issuance of land grants and the establishment of agricultural enterprises, under the organization of rancheros, dominated the region for the next thirty years. The defeat of Mexico in the Mexican-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 ushered in a new era.

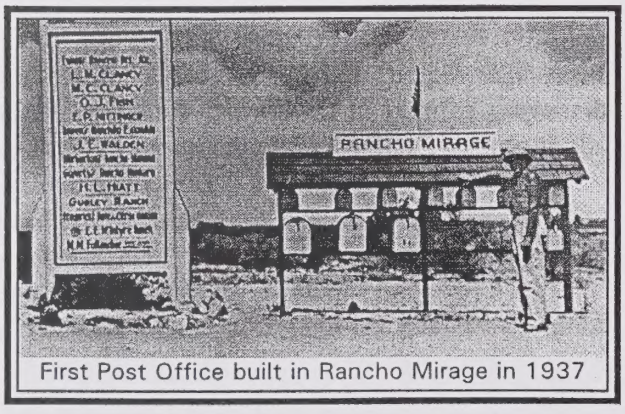
With the region under American control and the discovery of gold in California, the stage was set for admittance of California into the union in 1850, and led to the influx of peoples from many countries. The first U.S. Government Surveys were made in the Coachella Valley in 1855-56, by surveyors Henry Washington, John La Croze and James G. McDonald, who observed a number of trails and roads crossing through the Rancho Mirage study area.

The Bradshaw Trail and Ocean-to-Ocean Highway

The most prominent of these trails was one labeled as a "road" on the U.S. Government survey maps and ran along the course of the Whitewater River. It was joined by a trail that skirted the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains in a more southerly course. The surveyors also noted an "Indian Trail" apparently passing through the northeastern portion of the study area on Edom Hill. By the 1880's, the trail along the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains had become the main route for travelers passing through the study area. And by 1885 it had been identified as part of the road from San Bernardino to the Colorado River and was to become known as the Bradshaw Trail, one of the most important desert trails in Southern California during the 1860's and 70's.

An historic route between Los Angeles and the Palo Verde Valley, the Bradshaw Trail was in fact an ancient Indian trade route variously named the Cocomaricopa Trail or the Halchidoma Trail. In 1857, a small party led by Dr. Isaac W. Smith surveyed portions of the trail, including that segment running through the City, but the lack of water limited its use. By 1862, however, the William David Bradshaw exploration party had "rediscovered" the route, which for the next few years served as the primary access to the gold fields along the Colorado River.

By the late 1870s, services gradually discontinued with the depletion of the gold mines and the expansion of the railroads into the region, which eventually connected the coast directly to Yuma and completed the second transcontinental railroad authorized by Congress in 1866 and later was known as the Sunset Route. It was not until after the turn of the century that the Cocomaricopa Trail was revived as the Bradshaw Highway and ultimately became State Highway 111.



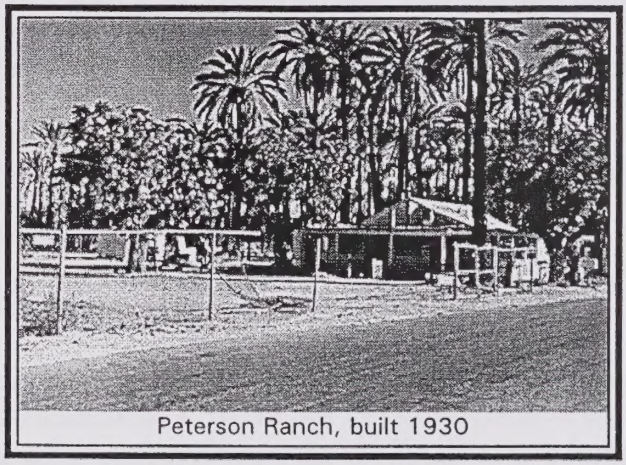
First Post Office built in Rancho Mirage in 1937

In 1926, the federal government established the National Highway System, which included the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway that ran through the City's SOI "along the Southern Pacific Railroad". Exact dates of construction are unclear, with archival sources tracing it to the late 1930s. Right-of-way for this highway was granted by the federal government in November of 1938, which was delineated as U.S. 60/70/99. Apparently proof of construction was never filed on this segment of the highway. A segment of Varner Road running through the City SOI was part of the original Ocean-to-Ocean Highway.

Early Rancho Mirage - A Rural History

Available historic sources from 1901 to 1915 indicate that there were no man-made features in present day Rancho Mirage other than the Bradshaw Highway and the Southern Pacific Railroad. By 1941, the earliest date of available development mapping, a substantial number of buildings had sprung up along present-day Bob Hope Drive, Clancy Lane and Highway 111, with several ranches and orchards clustered near present-day Da Vall Drive north of the Whitewater River, in the vicinity of Peterson Road, and in the Clancy Lane neighborhood.

Agricultural development in Rancho Mirage reflected the fast-growing date palm industry, which by the early 1940s had become the main agricultural staple in the region. Dates had been first introduced into the Indio area in 1904 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and growers adopted the new cash crop with enthusiasm. Major growers in Rancho Mirage included the Samual Peterson Ranch, Everett Da Vall's Wonder Palms Date Ranch, and the Snyder Date Gardens.


Peterson Ranch, built 1930

Modern Rancho Mirage - Premier World-Class Resort Community

Promotion of Rancho Mirage as a destination desert community began as early as 1924 with efforts of R.P. "Bert" Davie and E.E. McIntyre, who purchased hundreds of acres from Southern Pacific Railroad in eighty acre parcels. Shortly thereafter, Davie established a ranch house at Clancy Lane and built a north-south thoroughfare to connect his new desert paradise to the Bradshaw Highway; he named this road Rio del Sol (Way of the Sun), later renamed Bob Hope Drive. Promoted as Rio del Sol Estates, the development

became known as Little Santa Monica for the many new residents originating from there. Clancy Lane was named after Les M. and Helen Clancy, the first "gentleman farmers" to build their home in the development in 1932.

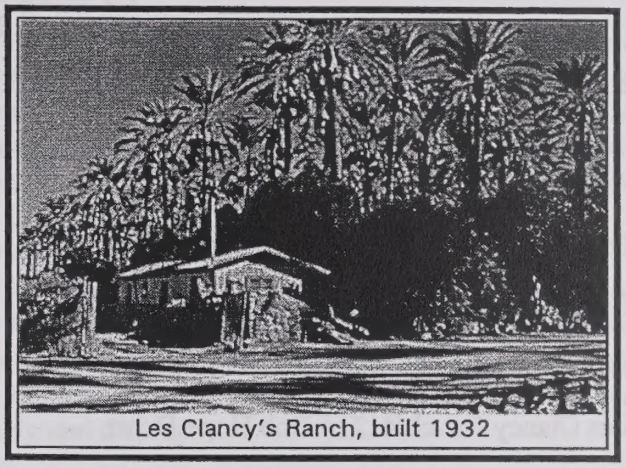
Another early focus of development was the Eleven Mile Ranch, which was located near Rancho Las Palmas and was exactly eleven miles from both Palm Springs and Indio. Purchased in 1925 by William F. Everett, the property had a long history which included the now demolished White Sun Ranch.

The name of Rancho Mirage was probably coined in 1934 when Louis Blankenhorn and Laurence Macomber launched a new real estate promotion on parcels in the area of present-day Highway 111, Bob Hope Drive and Indian Trail Drive. While this subdivision was quite successful, the demographic and activity center of the community continued to be Davie's Rio del Sol Estates through WW-II. After the war, Ronald Button and Dave Culver created small subdivisions around the "original " Rancho Mirage along Highway 111, the first to be filed in 1946.

Post WW-II also saw a new era in development that eventually gave Rancho Mirage its predominant image as a world-class resort residential community, characterized by its high quality planned residential golf course developments. The first of these was ThunderBird Country Club, opened in 1951, and Tamarisk Country Club, which opened in 1952. It was not until 1971 with the opening of Desert Island Country Club and the completion of its first residential units in 1972 that a new country club community was developed in Rancho Mirage. Desert Island also was the location of the City's first City Council hearings after its incorporation in 1974.

Rancho Mirage Historic Sites

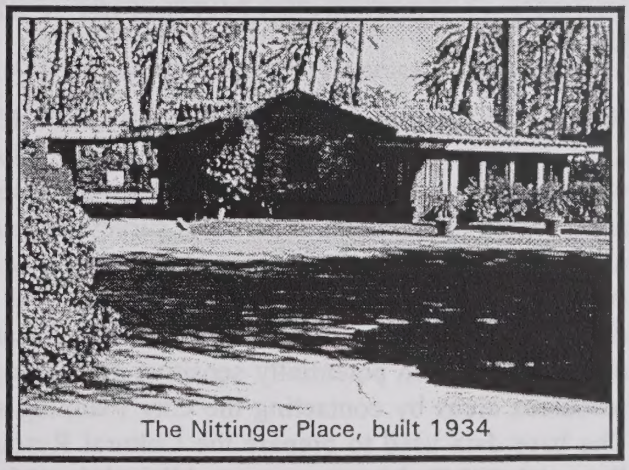
Over the decades, development in Rancho Mirage has left fourteen buildings that are listed on the California Office of Historic Preservation's Historic Property Data



Les Clancy's Ranch, built 1932

File for Riverside County. Excepting Peterson's Ranch, all were recorded between 1981 and 1982. These include the following structures, their date and status.

Two of the buildings listed below, Les Clancy Ranch and the Eleven Mile/White Sun Ranch (demolished), are determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Five others, Frank Clancy Ranch, Kneen Ranchito Escondido, Rancho Manana, Peterson Ranch, and Amy Croft House, were determined to be of local significance. The other seven properties have been determined ineligible to the National Register as well as local listings.



The Nittinger Place, built 1934

Table IV-2
Historic Sites/Structures In Rancho Mirage

Resources/Location	Date Constructed	Status
Amy Croft House/71825 Sahara Road	1935-36	Remodeled
Frank B. Clancy Ranch/72010 Clancy Lane	1938	Intact
Harris Johnson House/72026 Clancy Lane	1951	Intact
Kneen's Ranchito Escondido/72111 Clancy Lane	1946	Remodeled
Les Clancy Ranch/41216 Bob Hope Drive	1932	Intact
The Nittinger Place/72116 Clancy Lane	1934	Intact
Rancho Mirage Post Office/71802 Highway 111	circa 1940's	Demolished
Peggy Smith House/72065 Clancy Lane	1947	Remodeled
Peterson Ranch/39060 Peterson Lane	1930	Intact
Rancho Manana/72160 Clancy Lane	late 1930's	Intact
Reja Deaton House/72058 Clancy Lane	circa 1945	Intact
R.P. "Bert" Davie Ranch/72096 Clancy Lane	1938	Intact
Waldon Place/72019 Clancy Lane	1930's	Intact
Eleven Mile Ranch/43900 Magnesia Falls Road	1925	Demolished

CULTURAL RESOURCES POTENTIAL (CRP) MAP

Based upon field and literature surveys conducted to date, a resource sensitivity map has been developed, which identifies various prehistoric and historic resource areas within the planning area. Field survey techniques used in past years for recording/documenting site surveys were more intuitive and less methodical than those practiced today. Additional information can be made available on potentially sensitive archaeological resources areas by contacting the City Planning staff. The base data used to prepare the Cultural Resources Potential (CRP) Map are not published in order to protect resources from disturbance, damage or removal.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It is the obligation of the lead agency, the City of Rancho Mirage, to assure that every reasonable effort is made to locate, identify and evaluate archaeological, historical and cultural sites within its jurisdiction. The City must determine what actions or development activities have the potential to adversely affect known or suspected sites of significance. The manner in which the City must review and address issues related to Archaeological and Historic Resources is set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Appendix J, 1992 Edition). Projects involving a federal agency, federal funding or some other federal assistance fall under and must conform with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).

As time passes and the community continues to develop, opportunities for documenting and preserving archaeological and historic sites and artifacts will decrease. The City should encourage the research, documentation and recordation to register appropriate sites and structures within the community and vicinity. In this manner, positive action can be taken to identify, preserve and pass on the important traditions and history of the community.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Preservation, maintenance, continuity and enhancement of cultural heritage and resources in the City of Rancho Mirage, including historic and prehistoric cultural artifacts and traditions.

Policy 1
The City shall exercise its responsibility to locate, identify and evaluate archaeological, historical and cultural sites, and assure that appropriate action is taken to protect these resources.

Program 1.A
An archaeological and historical resources data base shall be established and maintained at City Hall, and shall incorporate information from the Eastern Information Center (EIC), focused cultural resource studies conducted in the study area, and other resources.

Policy 2
Development or land use proposals, which have the potential to disturb or destroy sensitive cultural resources, shall be evaluated by a qualified professional and, if necessary, appropriate mitigation measures shall be incorporated into project approvals.

Policy 3
Make every effort to ensure the protection of sensitive archaeological and historic resources from vandalism and illegal collection.

Program 3.A
Maintain mapping information and similar location-oriented resources in a confidential manner and assure that only those with appropriate professional and organizational ties are provided access to these sensitive records.

Program 3.B
In the course of reviewing development proposals and cultural surveys that identify sensitive resources, staff shall, where appropriate, encourage in-place preservation or the recovery and preservation of materials for later study and display.

Policy 4
The City shall support the listing of eligible properties, structures or sites as potential historic landmarks and their inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Program 4.A
In cooperation with local historical associations, the City shall periodically review the historical and archaeological resources of the area for possible application for status as a historical landmark or inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Program 4.B
The City Cultural Commission shall meet with staff and elected officials in prioritizing and proposing action on the preservation and registration of important archaeological and historical resources in the community and vicinity.

WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Water Resources Element addresses issues of water quantity, quality and availability for current and future needs. An important aspect of this element is the coordination and cooperation between the City and the Coachella Valley Water District, and other water agencies responsible for supplying water to the area. Waste water management has also become an increasingly important part of water management that is essential to the protection of ground water resources. The goals, policies and programs set forth in this element direct staff and City officials in the City management of this essential resource.

BACKGROUND

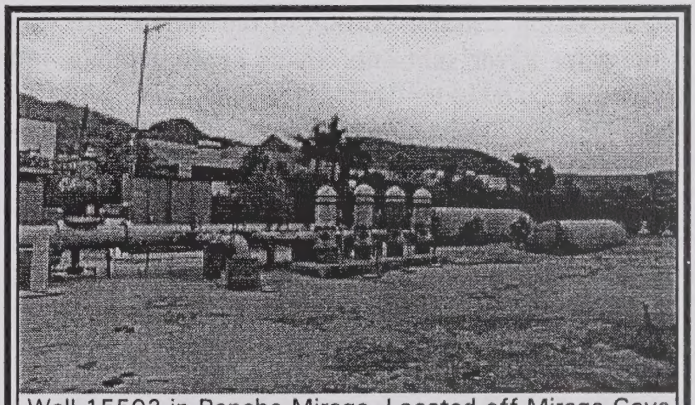
The Water Resources Element has a direct relationship to the Land Use Element, which has evolved to a major degree in response to the availability of water resources. Water resource issues are also associated with the Flooding and Hydrology Element and opportunities to protect and enhance groundwater recharge, as well as the Public Utilities and Fire and Police Protection Elements. The Water Resources Element is also related to the Community Design, Economic Development and Emergency Preparedness Elements.

The Water Resources Element addresses topics set forth in subdivision (d) of the California Government Code Section 65302. Also, the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 21083.2(g), empowers the community to require that adequate research and documentation be conducted when the potential for significant impacts to water and other important resources exists.

The production of water by Native Americans within the past 500 years has included the direct use and diversion of streams in the mountain canyons, the digging of wells to intercept the aquifer in Indian Wells, and the exploiting of artesian wells that occur in many areas of the Valley. Early mechanical water production in the Rancho Mirage area started with the drilling of wells for the irrigation of dates and citrus. It was not until decades later that the enormous extent of the ground water resource in the Coachella Valley was recognized.

Until the 1930's, ground water recharge was from natural runoff and percolation. There has been inflow of groundwater throughout the Coachella Valley, however, fault barriers, constrictions in the basin profile, and areas of low permeability limit and control the movement of groundwater. Analysis of these structures by the U.S. Geological Survey and the California Department of Water Resources have determined that groundwater basins are separated into distinct subbasins and subareas within subbasins. The first 1,000 feet of the Ocotillo Conglomerate and other water-bearing fill eroded into the fault-controlled valley floor comprise a storage capacity of more than 39 million acre feet (one acre foot equals about 327,000 gallons).

Domestic Water Resource

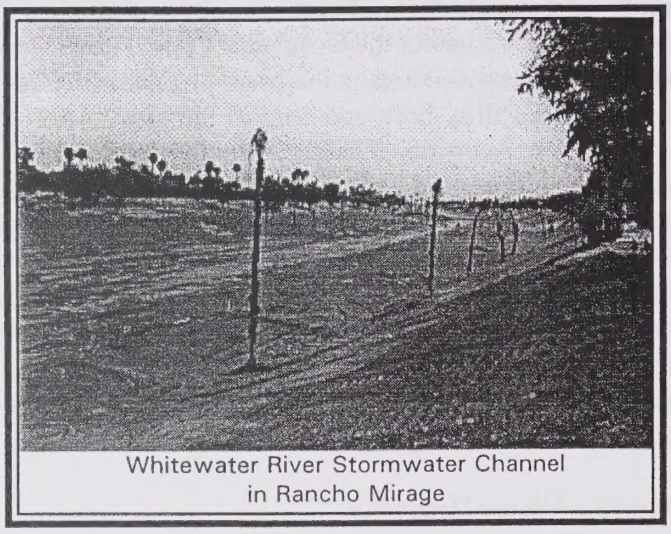


Well 15502 in Rancho Mirage. Located off Mirage Cove Drive. Photo taken of piping, well motors, hydro tanks, and telemetering panels. Photo taken south of site looking north.

In the City, domestic water services are provided by the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) utilizing wells to extract groundwater from the Whitewater River subbasin. These subbasin groundwater sources are being recharged via imported water carried by the Metropolitan Water District aqueduct, which passes through the north end of the Coachella Valley. Major natural sources of groundwater recharge include infiltration of runoff from the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and San Bernardino

Mountains. The Whitewater River subbasin serves as the primary groundwater repository for the Rancho Mirage area. Limited portions of the City's Sphere-of-Influence (SOI) may also occur within the limits of the Garnet and Mission Creek subbasins.

Whitewater Subbasin



Whitewater River Stormwater Channel in Rancho Mirage

Encompassing a major portion of the valley floor, the Whitewater River subbasin covers approximately 400 square miles, and extends from the junction of I-10 and State Highway 111, southeast approximately 70 miles to the Salton Sea. It is divided into four subareas; Palm Springs subarea, Thermal subarea, Thousand Palms subarea, and Oasis subarea. Surrounding subbasins include the Mission Creek Subbasin, Garnet Hill Subbasin, and the Desert Hot Springs Subbasin, which are not directly related to the portion of the Whitewater Subbasin serving the City and its sphere.

Depletion of the groundwater in storage in the Whitewater subbasin has continued steadily since the expansion of agricultural activities in the beginning of this century and the development of the Coachella Valley as a destination resort area, with numerous golf courses and lushly landscaped residential developments. As an example of the impacts of early urbanization in the Coachella Valley, stored water in the Palm Springs subarea of the subbasin dropped approximately 260,000 acre feet (2%) during the period from 1935 to 1957. Since this period, the population in the area served has grown several fold and a multitude of golf courses have also significantly added to water demand.

With the introduction of Colorado River water into the lower Coachella Valley in 1951, the total amount of groundwater storage in the Valley began to increase. Between 1935 and 1951 the drawdown on the Whitewater River subbasin resources totaled approximately 760,000 acre feet. The increase of water in storage after 1951 generally represents unusable semi-perched ground water in the lower valley, which largely resulted from crop irrigation and did not represent an increase in a usable water supply. These perched waters may one day become available for use when treatment becomes cost-effective.

The portion of the Whitewater subbasin which serves the City and most of its sphere is the upper portion of the Thermal subarea, which extends from Cathedral City to Point Happy (Washington Street and Hwy 111), and exhibits specific hydrologic characteristics, which affect the manner in which the subarea is recharged. The upper portion of the Thermal subarea occurs within the limits of the CVWD Management Plan, which includes the Palm Springs, upper Thermal and Thousand Palms subareas. The Management Area has a storage capacity of approximately 11 million acre feet.

Overdraft in the Whitewater River Subbasin

The CVWD annually issues its Engineer's Report on Water Supply and Replenishment Assessment, which includes an update on overdraft conditions within the Whitewater River Subbasin Management Area. Natural inflows from rain and snow-melt from adjoining mountains flowing into the Management Area are approximately 49,000 acre feet per year. On the vicinity of Point Happy at Highway 111 and Washington Street, natural outflow from the same area is approximately 25,000 acre per year. Overdraft in the Management Area for 1993 was estimated at 24,026 acre feet, or 0.22% of estimated water in storage in the Area. This analysis assumes a non-consumptive return to groundwater in storage of 40% of production, and is based upon the 1990 recharge entitlement.

The table below illustrates the relative imbalance between consumption and all sources of groundwater recharge. It assumes that all of the 40% non-consumptive

return will reach the aquifer and be available for later use. The projections of water in storage are equally general in nature and necessarily inexact; retrievable amounts are estimates and should be viewed as approximations rather than finite quantities.

Table IV-3
Calculation of Overdraft (1993)
Whitewater River Subbasin Management Area

Item	Acre-Feet/Year
Production	(-) 182,043
Non-Consumptive Return	(+) 72,817
Natural Recharge	(+) 49,000
Natural Outflow	(-) 25,000
Groundwater Replenishment Based on 1990 Entitlements	(+) 61,200
Net Groundwater from Storage **(Overdraft)**	(-) 24,026
Estimated Storage	11,000,000
Percentage of **Overdraft**	**0.22%**

Notes: Assumes 60% consumptive use. Minus (-) equals outflow. Plus (+) equals inflow. Actual recharge for calendar year 1993 was 60, 183 acre-feet. Estimated water in storage is within first 1,000 feet of aquifer.

Consumptive Demand of City

As the City continues to develop it could raise city-wide total domestic water demand to approximately 20 million gallons per day upon General Plan buildout. The CVWD estimates that approximately 40% of domestic water consumed is reintroduced into the groundwater table and is not lost. This includes a percentage of irrigation water applied to residential and golf course landscaping.

All of these uses are factored into the District's per capita consumption estimate of 552 gallons per day. Impacts that are project-specific may be more or less on a per capita basis, depending on the type of development, the density in residential developments, and the level and type of landscaping and water-dependent amenities within each project.

As demand generated by residential and golf course development continues to increase, the on-going overdraft will generate progressively greater significant long-term cumulative impacts on the groundwater supply. While the provision of recharge water has greatly reduced the rate of overdraft, development in the Coachella Valley is expected to continue to reduce the amount of potable groundwater in storage. CVWD engineers estimate that by the year 2001, the water table in the Rancho Mirage area will be 70 to 90 feet higher than it would be without ground water recharge, which is described further below.

GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT PROGRAM

To further assure an on-going supply of domestic water to service the expanding recreation resort development occurring in the upper Valley, the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and the Desert Water Agency (DWA) contracted for State Project Water to meet the anticipated demand. The construction of the Coachella Aqueduct to convey State Project Water has not yet been undertaken. Until a separate system can be developed, the CVWD and DWA have entered into an agreement with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) to exchange entitlements to allow the Coachella Valley to be provided with Colorado River water through its Colorado River Aqueduct, which passes through the northwest portion of the Coachella Valley in the vicinity of the Whitewater River.

Since 1973, Colorado River water has been directed to spreading ponds in the upper valley, which are recharging the Whitewater River subbasin. From 1973 through 1994 approximately 1.1 million acre-feet of Colorado River water has been diverted to recharge the Whitewater subbasin. Occasionally there are temporary halts or severe reductions in diversion of recharge waters through the Aqueduct to allow the MWD to fully supplement sources to the Los Angeles basin when there has been a lack of adequate rain and snow accumulation in the western Sierras.

Supplemental water for the Coachella Valley is assured through the year 2035. Various agreements and pacts have been entered into, which provide for additional water supplies, including the Colorado River Compact of 1922, the Boulder Canyon Act of 1928, the Seven Party Agreement of 1931, and the 1964 Supreme Court Decree in Arizona vs. California. While there is an overall decrease in water quality from Colorado River sources, which provides water higher in total dissolved solids, the quality difference is not regarded as significant.

To further reduce the impacts of development on groundwater supplies, the CVWD (and DWA) has implemented waste water reclamation strategies to utilize tertiary treated waste water for golf course, landscape and other irrigation purposes. The Palm Desert treatment plant has installed additional waste water treatment facilities providing the District with a 10 mgd capacity for tertiary treatment. Currently, CVWD tertiary treatment from the Cook Street plant averages about 8 mgd and on-site storage has been developed to assure availability.

Replenishment Program

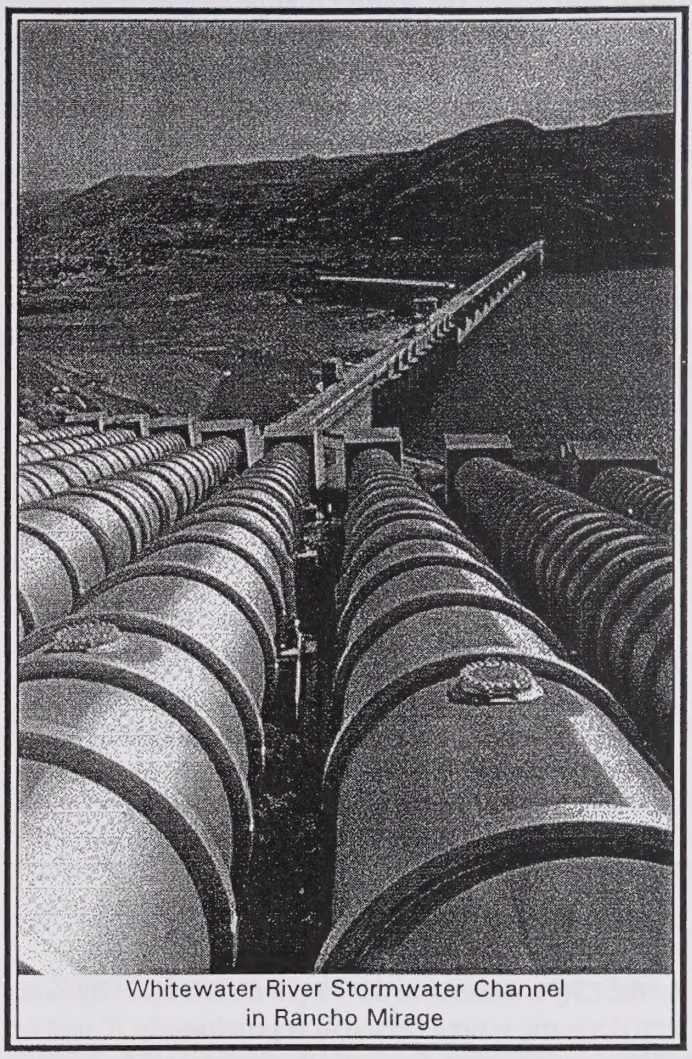
Empowered by Sections 31630 and 31639 of the California Water Code to collect water replenishment assessments, CVWD has placed the City and the upper portion of the Whitewater River subbasin in a resource management area and is coordinating with the Desert Water Agency in this management effort. The District has established a 1995-96 per parcel assessment charge of $37.58 through the Groundwater Replenishment Program.

Water Quality

Water quality in the Coachella Valley is generally good to excellent. Exceptions are primarily limited to perched and semi-perched water tables occurring the southern portions of the Whitewater River subbasin where on-going crop irrigation has increased total dissolved solids. Another more recent impact on area groundwater has been contamination associated with long-term discharge from on-lot septic systems. In areas with high rates of percolation septic system effluent may not spend adequate time in the soil strata to be cleaned by microbes and filtering.

With the importation of Colorado River water via the MWD aqueduct, the water quality in the upper Whitewater subbasin has been somewhat affected. The following table indicates the relative quality of surface waters recharging and/or passing through the subbasin.

Imported water from the Colorado River is about three times higher in total dissolved solids (TDS) than the upper Whitewater River source, and about one-fourth the TDS found in the Whitewater River source in the vicinity of Mecca. The impacts of Colorado River recharge waters on water quality in the Rancho Mirage area may be promoted by conditions that tend to favor horizontal flow rather than vertical flow into the aquifer. In the vicinity of the City there is still good potential for vertical mixing between the upper and lower aquifers, and the quality of groundwater in the Rancho Mirage area can be expected to remain relatively high.



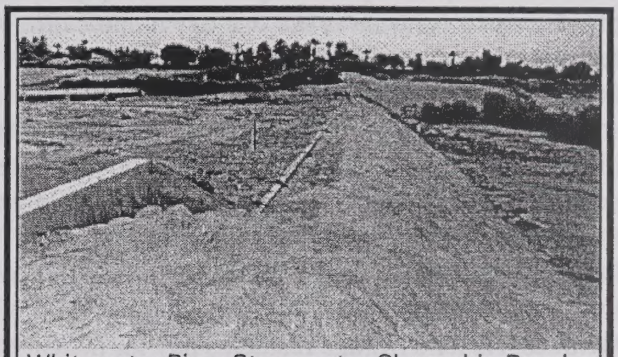
Whitewater River Stormwater Channel
in Rancho Mirage

California Regional Water Quality Control Board

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (WQCB) implements federal and state laws established to assure planning, implementation, management and enforcement, including penalties for noncompliance in the control of water quality. Major water quality control legislation includes the Federal Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Applicable

California statutes and administrative law include but are not limited to the California Water Code, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Code of regulations, and a variety of other codes such as Health and Safety Code, Fish and Game Code, and Public Resources Code.

In the Coachella Valley, the primary issues addressed by the WQCB are agricultural drainage, geothermal power impacts, the New River, Salton Sea, Tahquitz Creek and other sources of surface water. There are numerous other locations in the Whitewater River subbasin monitored by the WQCB, where inappropriate disposal of hazardous and toxic materials have threatened to contaminate groundwater. These range from leaking fuel storage tanks, illegal discharges of human or animal waste, dumping of waste oils and other hazardous liquids.



Whitewater River Stormwater Channel in Rancho Mirage. Sandy bottom will allow some degree of percolation of storm runoff.

Table IV-4
Mineral Analysis of Representative Surface Waters

Source	Whitewater River (North)	Snow Creek	Colorado River	Whitwater River (South)
Constituent	epm[1]/ppm[2]	epm / ppm	epm / ppm	epm / ppm
CA	1.75 / 35	0.50 / 10	3.97 / 79	9.08 / 181
Mg	0.90 / 11	0.0 / 0	2.31 / 79	3.74 / 45
Na	0.62 / 14	0.47 / 11	4.78 / 110	32.58 / 749
K	0.108 / 4.2	0.04 / 1.6	0.11 / 4.3	0.39 / 15
C1	0.14	0 / 0	6.01 / 213	15.96 / 566
Total Dissolved Solids	201 ppm	55 ppm	727 ppm	2,983 ppm

Source: DWR bulletin No. 108: Coachella Valley Investigation. California Department of Water Resources: July 1964.
[1] epm = Chemical equivalents per million.
[2] ppm = Parts per million by weight

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

The NPDES implements the federal Clean Water Act and was adopted in 1990. It requires the development, adoption and implementation of plans and programs for storm water management, which must, among other things, "...effectively" prohibit non-storm water discharge into the storm drain" and "require controls to reduce the discharge of pollutants from storm water systems to waters of the United States to the Maximum Extent Practical". The legislation also makes the implementation of pollutant control measures exempt from CEQA.

One of the primary strategies to comply with the provisions of NPDES is the use of on-site storm water retention or detention basins within any new development one acre or larger. These facilities may in some instances include artificial wetlands that use this biologically active zone to break down potential pollutants before they can contaminate surface runoff or reach the water table through percolation. These intercept structures will also be important in capturing sand and sediment before it is discharged into drainage facilities. Rancho Mirage residents pay for the City-wide portion of this program through Community Services Assessment #152 at the current (1996) rate of $4.68 per parcel per year.

Water Conservation

Water conservation is essential as both a short-term and long-term resource management strategy. With increasing demands on a water supply in overdraft, continuing efforts to reduce per capita consumption are a priority. One of the best opportunities for water conservation has been in the area of landscape design and maintenance. Fortunately, City residents have shown an appreciation for the native desert environment and the excellent opportunity it provides to reduce the use of turf grasses and other types of heavily water-dependent landscaping, with potentially significant water conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

Finally, water resources and their delivery cost money, whether the service is provided by a private company or a public agency. There is a direct relationship between the cost of a resource and how thoughtfully it is used. Inevitably, the District shall continue to raise rates to all its customers. As future costs of water resources and their delivery rise, individual conservation efforts can also be expected to increase.

The City has adopted a water conserving landscape ordinance as required by state law, which requires that new landscape plans be designed to incorporate more native and locally compatible drought tolerant planting materials and efficient irrigation systems. Water conservation should be second nature to desert dwellers, yet the need to control and manage our use of this limited resource must be constantly reminded. The long-term viability of our community and the Valley depend upon it.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The wise use and conservation of water resources will be a continuing central theme of community development planning in Southern California. Rancho Mirage and other local communities have developed programs to extend the use of efficient landscape and irrigation design, and to encourage the use of water efficient appliances and fixtures in homes and businesses. The City also has an important role to play in the long-term protection of this finite and ever more valuable resource.

Groundwater resource subbasins do not respect jurisdictional lines and the threat of pollution or contamination of groundwater must be viewed on a regional as well as a local level. Effective future stormwater management will also help protect groundwater and preserve capacity in stormwater facilities. Protection of our major mountain watersheds will also assure preservation of a viable long-term source of natural groundwater recharge to the City and the larger subbasin.

WATER RESOURCES GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A dependable long-term supply of clean and healthful domestic water to meet the needs of all segments of the community.

GOAL 2

An informed public that respects the City's finite water resource and maximizes protection and conservation efforts for the benefit of the entire community.

Policy 1

To the greatest extent practical, encourage the use of low water consuming, drought tolerant landscape plantings as a means of reducing water demand, and coordinate with CVWD to strengthen education/public relations programs to inform residents of the full range of water saving techniques available.

Program 1.A

Continue implementation of the water conservation-oriented landscape ordinance to comply with State Assembly Bill 325 (AB 325), by requiring the use of

natural and drought resistant planting materials and efficient irrigation systems.

Program 1.B
Coordinate and cooperate with CVWD in the continued development of educational materials and programs that encourage and facilitate water conservation throughout the community.

Policy 2
The City shall encourage, facilitate and require the use of water conserving appliances and fixtures in all new development.

Program 2.A
The City shall provide information on the use of low-flush toilets, and low-flow showerheads and faucets, and shall require the application of water conserving technologies in conformance with Section 17921.3 of the Health and Safety Code, Title 20, California Administrative Code Section 1601(b), and applicable sections of Title 24 of the State Code.

Policy 3
The City shall provide direction and guidelines for the development of on-site stormwater retention facilities consistent with local and regional drainage plans and community design standards.

Program 3.A
Establish regulations and guidelines for the development and maintenance of project-specific on-site retention/ detention basins, which implement the NPDES program, enhance groundwater recharge and complement regional flood control facilities, and address applicable community design policies.

Policy 4
Evaluate all proposed land use and development plans for their potential to create groundwater contamination hazards from point and non-point sources, and confer with other appropriate agencies to assure adequate review.

AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Air Quality Element coordinates the planning of land use, circulation, housing and other City policies with their potential effects on air quality. It is the intent of this element and air quality planning in the region and locally to meet ambient air standards set by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

BACKGROUND

Community air quality is one of the most essential issues associated with public health and safety. The City's Air Quality Element is directly related to the type and intensity of land uses established in the Land Use Element, and the number, length and timing of traffic trips established in the Circulation Element. It is also related to the Economic Development Element, which addresses air quality and other valuable natural resources important to the local economy. This Element is also related to the amount and rate of housing development established in the Land Use and Housing Elements, and to the amount of open space planned for preservation in the Open Space and Conservation Element.

The State Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 2595 in 1988, which became known as the California Clean Air Act, in order to assure that the future health and welfare of the people of the State of California and the State's environment and economy are protected, regardless of action or direction from the federal government. State Implementation Plans are designed to meet ambient air quality standards by the deadlines specified in the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) and emission reduction targets of the California Clean Air Act (CCAA). These Acts base the extent of required emission reductions and the length of time to attain standards on the severity of a District's pollution.

The California Air Resources Board, which shares the primary responsibility for air quality management in the State, has taken a committed approach to expeditious implementation of the Act. The CARB has been entrusted with an overseer role, to advise and evaluate local air pollution control agency and District efforts to comply with CCAA requirements.

The City of Rancho Mirage is located within the portion of the Southeast Desert Air Basin (SEDAB), which is regulated by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (District). The District is responsible for regional planning affecting a variety of areas, including air quality. The District has identified two areas of air quality degradation having to do with ozone (0_3) and micron-sized particulate matter. Associated issues, including land development and traffic generation, are also associated with the District's coordinated air quality management efforts.

The District is also responsible for development of the regional Air Quality Management Plan, which is a multi-prong, multi-tier effort to regulate pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources. The Plan's implementation affects city and CVAG regulatory roles, and is also meant to result in the lowering the production of ozone/photochemical smog, which is transported into the Valley.

Through its membership in the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the City is also involved in the regional management of air quality through the cooperative implementation of the Coachella Valley PM_{10} Plan. This plan has been jointly developed by the District, CVAG and its member cities and has been approved by the U.S. EPA. The CVAG cities are nationally recognized as leaders in the management of PM_{10}.The prevailing conditions that have spurred the development and implementation of this plan are discussed below.

The City and CVAG have also participated in the development and implementation of the Regional Mobility Element of the Regional Comprehensive Plan developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Addressing federal and State law requiring a regional transportation plan, the element issues of roadway congestion and air quality management.

Climate and Air Quality

The Coachella Valley is a geographically and meteorologically unique area wholly contained within the Southeast Desert Air Basin. The region is currently impacted by significant air pollution levels caused by the transport of pollutants from coastal air basins to the west, primarily ozone, and by primarily locally generated PM_{10}. The mountains surrounding the region isolate the Valley from coastal influences and create a hot and dry low lying desert. As the desert heats up it draws cooler coastal air through the narrow San Gorgonio Pass, generating strong and sustained winds that cross the most active fluvial (water caused) and aeolian (wind) erosion zones in the Valley. These strong winds suspend and transport large quantities of sand and dust, reducing visibility, damaging property and constituting a significant health threat.

The Coachella Valley is also susceptible to air inversions, which trap a layer of stagnant air near the ground where it can be further loaded with pollutants. These inversions create conditions of haziness, which is caused by moisture, suspended dust, and a variety of chemical aerosols emitted by trucks and automobiles, furnaces and other sources.

The City of Rancho Mirage, in relation to other areas in Southern California, essentially has good air quality. In the past few decades noticeable deterioration of air quality has occurred due to increased development and population growth, traffic, construction activity and various site disturbances. It is apparent that although air pollution is emitted from various sources in the Coachella Valley, substantial degradation of air quality may be attributed primarily to sources outside of the Valley.

POLLUTANTS

Pollutants are generally classified in two categories, primary and secondary. Primary pollutants are those which are a direct consequence of energy production and utilization, while secondary pollutants are those which undergo chemical changes after emission. Primary pollutants typically affect only local areas, and do not undergo chemical modification or further dispersion. Secondary pollutants, on the other hand, do disperse and undergo chemical changes under conditions of high ambient temperatures and high rates of solar insolation. Primary sources and their pollutants are a direct consequence of the combustion of petroleum and other fuels resulting in the production of oxides of carbon, sulphur, nitrogen, and a number of reactive hydrocarbons and suspended particulates. Principal secondary pollutants are termed oxidants and include ozone (O_3), peroxynitrates, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and chemical aerosols.

Sensitive Receptors

There is widespread concern about the serious detrimental effects caused by even the most common pollutants. Ozone, particulates, carbon monoxide and other pollutants pose a very real threat to health and property in the desert. The City's high median age implies that a major portion of residents are particularly susceptible to respiratory distress from the two principal pollutants of concern, ozone and PM_{10}. Other sensitive receptors include hospitals and nursing homes, schools and parks.

The following is a brief summary of the primary criteria pollutants that can be found in the Rancho Mirage area.

Ozone (O_3)

Most commonly known as smog, ozone is a pungent, colorless, highly reactive gas which is the main component of photochemical smog. This is a daily occurrence that commonly takes place from the pollution emitted primarily by mobile sources. The potential impact ozone can have on human health is significant, as ozone molecules react with sensitive lung tissues, irritating and inflaming the lungs, compromising the body's ability to fight respiratory infections. Ozone can also cause extensive damage to vegetation and has been associated with major damage to forests to the west and elsewhere throughout the world. The majority of smog experienced in the Rancho Mirage area results from the transport of pollutants from Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Particulate Matter (PM_{10})

Particulate Matter refers to small particles, both solid and liquid, such as dust, sand, metallic and mineral particles, road-surfacing materials, pollen, smoke, fumes and

aerosols. These various particles are categorized by "settling" characteristics, and those which are the size of 10 microns or smaller are referred to as PM_{10}. PM_{10} particles can cause serious health problems, as they can pass through the lung's filtering system, lodge deep in the lung's tissues, and directly irritate these tissues. PM_{10} is considered one of the most prevalent forms of pollution and health impacts in the Rancho Mirage area, and therefore is discussed further in relation to "Blowsand Effects", below.

Recent research and analysis indicates that the health effects associated with PM_{10} are more widespread than previously thought. Since the Coachella Valley's designation as a "non-attainment area" for meeting federal PM_{10} standards, large areas of California have been added to this category of impact. And while federal and state regulations have heretofore focused on particles of 10 microns or smaller, significant health concerns are now focusing further on the health effects of particles of 2.5 microns. Local studies to further gauge the relationship of particulate pollution to hospital admission and respiratory distress are currently (1996) underway.

The implementation of the Coachella Valley PM_{10} Plan has been very successful. To further facilitate the management programs established in the plan, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and CVAG have expanded monitoring of weather conditions and pollutant levels. Expansion of the program is expected to help local jurisdictions implement control measures and to substantiate city claims for reimbursement for major wind events.

OTHER POLLUTANTS

Nitric Oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), commonly referred to as NOx, are the two most significant oxides of nitrogen for air pollution. NOx is formed as a byproduct of combustion. NOx levels may be imported from air basins to the west, or may increase local with inversion layers. *Carbon Monoxide (CO)* is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas which is generally produced by the incomplete combustion of carbon containing fuels. Carbon Monoxide passes through the lungs directly into the blood stream, binding with hemoproteins and reducing the amount of oxygen reaching the vital organs such as the heart, brain and tissues. Levels of concern are generally found along heavily traveled roadways during periods of limited air movement.

Of all of these pollutants, Ozone and PM_{10} are the most prevalent in the Rancho Mirage area. By integrating CVAG and SCAQMD efforts in the development of air quality management plans, the City assures a more efficient regulation, monitoring and response appropriate to local meteorological conditions.

Blowsand Effects

PM_{10} in the Rancho Mirage area comes mostly from locally generated fugitive dust. Each year, winter rains cause erosion of adjacent mountains, and water run-off produces and sorts substantial deposits of gravel and sand throughout the major drainage areas in the Valley. During the spring months and at other times of the year, persistent and strong winds carry the sand methodically southeast through the center of the Valley. This process effectively combines water and wind erosion to generate a wide range of sand and very fine dust.

Sometimes referred to as "blowsand", this natural sand migration produces PM_{10} in two ways: (1) by direct particle erosion and fragmentation (natural PM_{10}), and (2) by secondary effects, such as sand deposits on road surfaces that can be ground into PM_{10} by moving vehicles, and re-suspended in the air by those vehicles (man-made PM_{10}).

Blowing particulate matter is deposited on fabrics, buildings and automobiles and animal respiratory systems. Extensive wind-borne soil can obliterate landscaping and dirty streets. Losses and damage occur to materials and finishes, as blowing sand can pit windshields, destroy finishes and require additional cleaning and sweeping of exposed areas. Dust on vegetation can suppress plant growth and interfere with respiration through leaves.

The adverse health effects associated with PM_{10} include reduced lung function. Children and the elderly are considered especially susceptible, as are those suffering from asthma, bronchitis, or cardio-pulmonary distress. PM_{10} has been shown to generally have an adverse impact on mortality and morbidity.

State and Federal Standards

Federal and State ambient air quality standards are set at levels believed adequate to protect the health of the most sensitive population groups, particularly the elderly, children and people with respiratory diseases. State standards are more restrictive than federal.

The following table provides a breakdown of the pollutants monitored in the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the applicable State and federal standards.

Air Quality Monitoring Stations

For the past several years, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and in most recent years the South Coast Air Quality Management District, have operated two regional air quality monitors in the Coachella Valley, one at the Palm Springs Regional Airport and the other in the downtown area of the City of Indio.

Table IV-5
State and Federal Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	State Standards Time/Averaging Conc.	Federal Standards Time/Average Conc.
Ozone	1 Hour/.09ppm	1 Hour/.12ppm
Carbon Monoxide	1 Hour/20ppm 8 Hour Ave./9ppm	1 Hour/35ppm 8 Hour Ave./9ppm
Nitrogen Dioxide	1 Hour/.25ppm	Annual Avg./.053ppm
Sulfur Dioxide	1 Hour/.25ppm 24 Hours/.05ppm	Dry Deposition Only
Particulate Matter	Any Sample:50ug/m3 Annual Geo. Mean:30ug/m3	24 Hour:150ug/m3 Annual Arith. Mean:50ugm3

Ppm = parts per million
Source: SCAQMD

With the greater attention being dedicated to particulate matter, monitoring for PM_{10} has been expanded both through temporary research and field data collection stations as well as the siting of permanent wind speed and pollutant measuring equipment.

Developer's Air Quality Management Manual

In 1992, in response to requirements of SCAQMD to monitor air quality impacts associated with site disturbance and grading activities, the City initiated preparation of a manual to assist developers in controlling air quality impacts. Entitled the Developer's Manual for the Preparation of Project-Specific Local Air Quality Management Plans to Control PM_{10} and Other Emissions, this award-winning manual has been prepared as a practical tool for developers, consultants, and contractors to report on air quality impacts and mitigation measures associated with individual developments.

The manual's easy to use, step-by-step procedures also include a menu of activities and programs designed to reduce development impacts to the lowest practical level. It includes methods for calculating potential dust generation and construction vehicle emissions through simple worksheets. A wide variety of methods for controlling impacts are described, including a

comprehensive list of vendors providing dust control and other pollution management services. The City has received particular recognition from SCAQMD for this pro-active approach to air quality protection.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It is the responsibility of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, CVAG and the City of Rancho Mirage to monitor pollutant levels and regulate air pollution sources. With the installation of additional monitoring devices in the Whitewater River, the District is collecting data to establish a "naturally occurring" or "background" level for PM_{10} in the Coachella Valley. This data will allow a more meaningful estimate of manmade PM_{10} emissions.

The issues addressed in the Air Quality Element are a part of those set forth in the California Government Code, Section 65302(b), where within the requirements set forth for the Circulation Element, the Government Code conditions that air quality trends and existing air quality levels be analyzed. In addition, the California Clean Air Act (Assembly Bill 2595), necessitates the development of air quality policies and programs which will protect and preserve the environment and general public from harmful air pollutants.

AIR QUALITY GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Preservation and enhancement of regional air quality for the protection of the health and welfare of the community as a whole.

Policy 1
The City shall coordinate and cooperate with CVAG and SCAQMD in the on-going monitoring and management of major pollutants affecting the City and region, with particular focus on PM_{10}, and shall provide all required reporting to be included in SCAQMD's annual report.

Program 1.A
Participate, through CVAG and SCAQMD, in the monitoring of all air pollutants of regional concern on a continuous basis, and maintain records of trends in regional air quality.

Program 1.B
Make available the City's Air Quality Management manual to encourage and facilitate self-regulation to the greatest extent practical. Coordinate with developers and encourage the phasing and staging of development to assure the lowest construction-related pollutant emission levels practical. The City shall impose mitigation measures, including the use of water trucks and temporary irrigation systems, as well as other measures which will effectively limit fugitive dust emissions resulting from construction or other site disturbance.

Policy 2
The City Land Use Element shall be developed and maintained to locate air pollution point sources, such as manufacturing facilities, at an appropriate distance from residential areas and other sensitive receptors.

Policy 3
Promote the development of pedestrian-oriented retail centers, as well as community-wide multi-use trails and bike paths, dedicated bike lanes and other desirable alternatives to motor vehicle traffic.

Policy 4
Promote the appropriate and cost-effective development and coordination of mass transit/shuttle service linking residential, shopping, resort and commercial centers of the City, and participate with CVAG, Southern California Association of Governments and public and private service providers to improve and optimize regional transportation services.

Policy 5
Encourage the use of clean alternative energy sources for transportation, heating and cooling whenever practical.

Program 5.A
The City Shall consider the use of CNG and electric powered vehicles, as well as other alternative and/or renewable energy sources to the extent cost-effective.

Program 5.B
Wherever practical, the City shall use cost effective alternative energy sources for transportation.

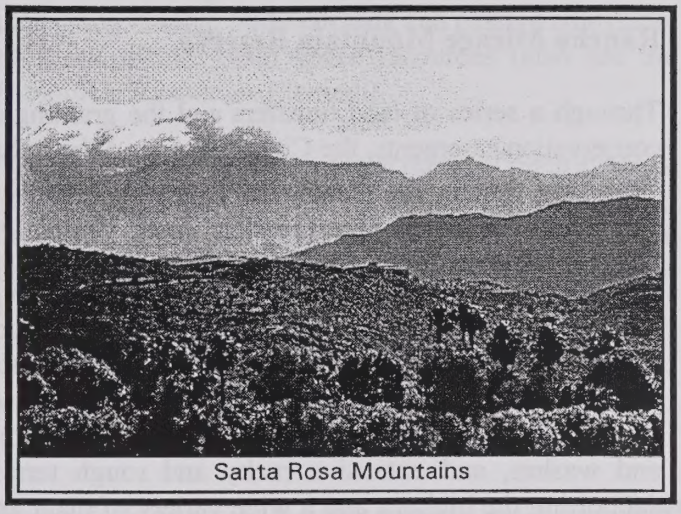
Policy 6
All development proposals brought before the City will be reviewed for potential adverse effects on air quality and will be required to mitigate any significant impacts.

Program 6.A
Conduct an initial study and, as appropriate, require detailed air quality analyses for all applications which have the potential to adversely affect air quality.

Program 6.B
Projects with the potential to generate significant levels of air pollutants, such as manufacturing facilities and site development operations, shall be required by the City to incorporate air pollution mitigation in their design and operation, and to utilize the most advanced technological methods feasible.

Program 6.C
The City may monitor the effectiveness of transportation management programs of employers, which may include coordinated carpooling, off-peak shift times, employee flex-time and other components. As future demand warrants, promote and support the development of a Park-and-Ride program to decrease existing and future traffic levels within the community.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT


Santa Rosa Mountains

PURPOSE

The Open Space and Conservation Element addresses the need for the preservation of open space lands and ensuring the conservation and thoughtful management of natural resources, including watersheds, wildlife habitat, energy, mineral and scenic resources. These finite resources can be preserved and reclaimed, but as growth continues so too will the demand for and pressure on natural resources, including open space lands.

It is the intent of this Element to define and establish open space and conservation areas in an effort to preserve and expand these important resources and determine how they may be most effectively managed. Policies and programs will serve as the tools to insure the preservation and management of these resources and discourage premature or inappropriate conversion of open space and conservation lands to urban uses, thereby assuring their long-term viability and integration with regional open space resources.

BACKGROUND

The broad and comprehensive nature of the issues and subjects of this Element relate directly and indirectly to many other elements of this General Plan. The Land Use, Circulation, Parks and Recreation, Biological and Cultural Resources, Water Resources, and Geotechnical Elements are directly related to the Open Space and Conservation issues addressed in this Element. Its design is not only the assurance of continued availability of land for the possible production, use and conservation of energy and natural resources, but also for the enjoyment of scenic beauty and recreational uses.

Open space land is generally defined as any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space uses. These areas primarily include lands designated for the preservation of natural resources (plant and animal communities), rivers, streams and their banks, managed crop lands and mineral deposits, parks and recreational facilities, and areas where the presence or existence of hazardous materials or conditions have prohibited development (Government Code Section 65560(b)).

The Open Space Lands Act (Government Code Section 65566) requires local governments to prepare open space plans before adopting required open space related zoning ordinances. This helps to ensure that open space zoning remains consistent with the open space plan. The Act marked the first legislative signal in the open space movement and has remained practically unaltered since its original enactment in 1970.

Government Code Section 65302(d) requires that General Plans include elements addressing issues of resource conservation, and set forth the areas that may be addressed, including reclamation, prevention of pollution or resource degradation, and protection of watersheds. In this regard, please see the Energy and Mineral Resources, Air Quality and Water Resources Elements of this Plan.

Open Space for Resource Preservation and Outdoor Recreation

An essential priority in the community design of the City is the investment in parks, community spaces, and open space and conservation areas. With an anticipated increase in the population of California, Riverside

County, and the Coachella Valley region, it is necessary to plan for the preservation of valuable open space land. Open space within the City can provide relief from urban congestion, while creating opportunities for recreational activities, settings for public activities, as well as places to gather in more natural environments.

Open space areas for the use of outdoor recreation include those areas with outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including those accessible to washes; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space facilities; examples of these lands include utility easements, steep terrain and mountainous areas, and wash beds and their banks, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

Santa Rosa Mountains National Scenic Area (SRMNSA)

The Santa Rosa Mountains have been recognized by the U.S. Congress as a nationally important scenic and natural resource area, which deserves planning for the long-term protection of valuable wildlife and scenic resources and for the enjoyment of all Americans. While not a formal federal protection action, the mountains' designation as a National Scenic Area provides increased opportunity for federal funding for mountain protection. Currently and in the future it is anticipated that federal budget proposals will make available funding for acquisition of lands within the National Scenic Area by the Bureau of Land Management and possibly other entities.

The recently (1995) completed Santa Rosa Mountains National Scenic Area Visitors Center, located on Highway 74 near the mountain foothills, provides exhibits and information on the mountain's resources, as well as gardens of indigenous and ethnographically important plants. The SRMNSA is also part of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) planning area. This regional resource management effort was begun in late 1993 and is coordinated through the Coachella Valley Association of Governments.

The City has been and should continue to be an important participant in this vital resource planning effort. The MSHCP's eco-system approach allows resource management and conservation to address entire biological systems and may prevent or reduce the need for listing additional individual species.

Rancho Mirage Mountain Reserve

Through a series of land transfers and the granting of conservation easements, the City of Rancho Mirage has been the first in the Coachella Valley to establish a mountain resource preservation area within its incorporated city limits. Originally established to address the habitat preservation needs of the peninsular bighorn, the conservation issues have been broadened to include other biological resources and their habitat. Currently (1996), the City Mountain Reserve area encompasses approximately 5,267 acres and includes small canyons and washes, and extensive rocky and rough terrain supporting the bighorn and a wide variety of plant and animal life (also see the Biological Resources Element).

In addition to City-owned mountainous lands, the Mountain Reserve area also includes state and federal lands managed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These lands include the Magnesia Springs Ecological Preserve managed by CDFG and extensive BLM holdings in rocky hillside habitat areas. Only limited mountainous land is held in private ownership; the Coachella Valley Mountain Conservancy hopes to purchase remaining private lands and incorporate them into the Coachella Valley Mountain Conservancy management system.

Coachella Valley and Willow Hole/Edom Hill Reserves

Residents of Rancho Mirage also have managed- access to two convenient and important wildlife management areas in the Coachella Valley; the Willow Hole/Edom Hill Preserve and the Coachella Valley Reserve, both originally established to assure long-term viable habitat for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard. Both of these resource areas also host a wide variety of plant and animal communities and support important species of both nesting and migratory birds. Both reserves includes lands crossed by the San Andreas Fault System, which has created unique micro-environments supporting

native desert fan palms (Washingtonia filifera) and other unique species. The visitor's center at the 13,000 acre Thousand Palms Reserve provides a series of marked trails and an interpretive center. There are also areas for picnicking, hiking, bird-watching and passive enjoyment of these special open space resources (also see the Biological Resources Element).

The table below illustrates the acreage of open space in 1994 in the City of Rancho Mirage and its surrounding areas. For further information as to the location of these open space areas, please see the Parks and Recreation Element.

Parks and Recreation Areas

In addition to the open space resources typically associated with sensitive biological or visual resources, developed and undeveloped park lands are also important open space resources that need to be planned for use, management and preservation. Principles of integrated enhancement that incorporate the many uses of open space for recreation, scenic viewsheds and passive enjoyment, and preserve biological and cultural resources, should be found in all the City's open space lands. Examples of public open space include the Whitewater Park, the Michael Wolfson Park, and the future Sunnylane, Vista Montana and Section 30 parks. These facilities provide important managed open space areas designed for use and recreation activities.

Table IV-6
Designated Open Space Lands
City of Rancho Mirage General Plan Study Area*

Parks/Open Space Area	Approx. Acres
Lands Designated Mountain Reserve (Designated Public OS-MR and not designated as Parkland)	5,269
Whitewater Park	8.25
Wolfson Park	1.1
Sunnylane Park	10
Vista Montana Park	N/A
Magnesia Springs Ecological Preserve Reserve	180
Total (Approximately)	**5,468.35**
Additional Open Space Lands near the City of Rancho Mirage	
Coachella Valley Reserve	13,000
Willow Hole/Edom Hill Reserve	587
Joshua Tree National Park	558,000

* Park Facilities providing open space experiences are discussed further in the Parks, Recreation and Trails Element.

Trails and Floodways

Floodway channels and utility easements serving also as trails can provide public access links between open space areas, providing residents with alternate access. A significant opportunity for this type of floodway easement has been developed in and along the Whitewater River Channel. The channel's banks include revetment (pavement) to protect against flood erosion, but this revetment is frequently buried, planted and used as golf course and other open space lands. Appropriate hard surfaces of compacted native material and asphalt have been developed for use as equestrian, bike and pedestrian trails. The Open Space and Conservation Element encourages the planning and development of additional trails within or the channel bottoms or easements, which may remain dirt for equestrian access (Please see the Flooding and Hydrology, Parks & Recreation, and Circulation Elements for additional information).

Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources

Open Space for the preservation of natural resources encompasses an assortment of areas which are required to maintain biological diversity, to protect significant physical features of the community, and to ensure that future generations will have access to natural environments. Conservation is defined as the management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect. Locally and across the country, finite and nonrenewable resources are beginning to be depleted by population increases and development. Natural resources can be categorized into two groups: renewable and finite. Renewable resources include sunlight, fertile soils, forests, wildlife, water resources, streams, and scenic beauty. These resources can be refurbished by natural ecological cycles or sound management practices. Careful planning and management is necessary to ensure that these resources remain renewable.

Finite resources include fossil fuels, nonmetallic and metallic minerals. These resources are those that when destroyed or consumptively used cannot be replaced. Finite resources must be used thoughtfully and recycled at every opportunity in order to ensure their future availability. Although conservation may suggest the hoarding of natural resources for use at a later date, the aim of good conservation practices is to ensure a continuous yield of useful plants, animals and materials by establishing and practicing a balanced cycle of harvest and renewal.

Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources

While the most prevalent use of land is for residential, commercial, recreation and other development, there are many economically productive uses which rely on open land that is not over-burdened with development. Open Space for the managed production of resources requires open areas which have not yet been urbanized, such as agricultural lands, areas containing major mineral deposits, areas of economic importance for the production of food and energy, recreational uses, and areas required for recharging groundwater and for water storage.

Golf courses may be viewed as open space lands utilized for productive recreational uses. Beyond the intrinsic and integral value of wildlife habitat areas, they also constitute important community recreation, enjoyment and appreciation resources with important, if difficult to quantify, economic value. The potential wind energy resource located in the City's Sphere-of-Influence may also someday be a viable renewable energy production area.

Renewable Energy

The two major and potentially significant alternative energy resources within the Rancho Mirage area are solar and wind energy. The region has one of the highest insolation (sunshine) values in the United States, and the southwest desert region is the site of major energy installations. Solar energy, primarily in the form of thermal systems, is now widely used. The San Gorgonio Pass, including the Edom Hill resource area, is one of the world's most successful wind energy production sites, with the potential to provide up to 3,000 megawatts of clean and renewable electrical generating capacity. As the many costs associated with the use of fossil fuels continue to rise, renewable alternatives such as wind will become progressively more desirable and cost-effective

to develop. Also please see the Energy and Mineral Resources Element.

Open Space for Public Health and Safety

Also an important function of open space is its use as a buffer to separate people and buildings from hazards which could cause injury, damage, or death. Open space for public health and safety includes areas requiring special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions. These include earthquake fault zones, unstable soil or slope areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality. Although these lands remain open due to hazardous situations, they have potential for other uses. Land along fault lines can be retained in its natural condition as a wildlife corridor and flood control facilities may be usable for natural open space, wildlife habitat and recreation. (Also please see the Geotechnical, Flooding and Hydrology, Emergency Preparedness, Fire and Police, and Water Resources Elements and the General Plan EIR for more detailed information.)

Land Acquisition

One way to ensure the development or preservation of natural resources is through the designation of open space. Open space can allow the land to be used for the good of the entire community while remaining largely undeveloped. To help conserve open space in California, many conservation programs and legislative enactments have been put into effect. These programs include the Conservation Easement Act, Open-Space Easement Act of 1974, less-than-fee real property interests, and the Scenic Easement Deed Act.

The Conservation Easement Act (Civil Code Sections 815-816) enables a local government or a nonprofit organization to acquire continual easements for the conservation of agricultural and open space lands, and historic preservation. An agreement is made between the landowner and accepting agency as to the types of uses that can be permitted, which are then incorporated into the easement. The granting of a conservation easement may qualify as a charitable contribution for tax purposes or as an "enforceable restriction" for purposes of preferential assessment.

The Open Space Easement Act of 1974 (Government Code Sections 51070-51097) gives local governments the authority to accept easements granted to them or to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of conserving open space and agricultural lands.

The Less-Than-Fee Real Property Interest is facilitated by state law and provides another mechanism for preserving open space. This concept grants the land holder the right to prevent certain land uses. Easements that qualify as less-than-fee interests are often used because they are less expensive than the purchase of full fee rights, can be more effective than zoning, do not displace and often yield tax advantages to property owners. Local agencies may obtain these easements by purchase, exaction, or gift.

The Scenic Easement Deed Act (Government Code Sections 6950-6954) authorizes a local government to purchase fee or scenic easements, but there is no special mechanism for obtaining them. Land uses are regulated by the Act enabling local governments to adopt an ordinance for the purpose of establishing open space covenants with property owners.

A city may acquire real property rights in other various ways. The City may wish to consider additional acquisition methods such as *acquisition of fee simple absolute interests, joint acquisition, and land swapping,* which are discussed in the General Plan EIR.

Public Land Trusts

A public land conservation trust is another type of vehicle devoted to protecting open space, agricultural lands, wildlife habitats, and natural resource lands. Land trusts achieve their objectives primarily through acquiring and managing interests in land.

Land conservation trusts preserve open space and resource lands in a variety of ways. Some use their funds to acquire fee simple interest in real estate and then manage or lease back their holdings. Others purchase conservation easements which protect sensitive land from development while allowing owners to sell their remaining property interests to whomever they please.

Since they are less fettered by red tape, private land trusts such as The Nature Conservancy, are usually able to respond more quickly than governmental entities to sudden and fleeting purchasing opportunities. They also use their real estate experience to help public agencies with the mechanics of acquisition. A public land trust helps to preserve environmentally sensitive open space and conservation lands, pursue state and federal financing with grants and loans, and other assistance mechanisms for the preservation of open space.

Funding Mechanisms

Viable funding mechanisms will be essential to finance the acquisition of open space and may include state general obligation bonds, tax increment financing, and grants. In addition to the funding mechanisms mentioned, the California Legislature has helped organizations create a broad range of categorical grant and loan programs that can help to finance open space and make its acquisition more economically feasible for smaller communities, including the following state programs:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund/Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Habitat Conservation Program/Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Simms Trail Bill/Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Public Access Program/Department of Fish and Game.
- Wildlife Conservation Board Program/Department of Fish and Game.
- Urban Forestry Program/Department of Forestry.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City of Rancho Mirage is located in a natural setting where rocky hillside and snow-capped granite mountains, blue skies and clean air provide a high quality of life for its residents. In order to continue the unique resort residential life-style during future years of continuing development, open space will need to be maintained and preserved for future generations.

The thoughtful implementation of the City General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and other regulatory mechanisms will play an essential role in preserving existing open space and conservation areas. They will also assure that continued development does not adversely impact these areas and may provide opportunities and mechanisms for long-term conservation of lands not currently under the City's control.

The City can also play an important role in encouraging the creation of non-profit conservation groups and assist in securing open space lands for long-term preservation. Assistance may also be provided in helping to secure state and federal grants for purchase of conservation easements and/or fee simple ownership interest. The on-going efforts of the City, CVAG, adjoining communities and private interests can add to the conservation and preservation of one of the community's most valuable assets: its natural resources and open space lands.

The following goals, policies and programs provide the basis for the long-term viability of this important component of the community.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

Conservation, preservation and management of open space areas and protection of environmental resources and threatened animal species, protection against environmental hazards, and provision of enhanced recreational opportunities and scenic qualities of the City.

GOAL 2

Preservation of the City's low density resort residential character, including maintenance of natural and managed open space lands, and scenic resources.

Policy 1
Identify and map lands suitable for the preservation as passive and active open space areas to be added to the already identified existing resource areas of this type.

Program 1.A
Confer and coordinate with other responsible agencies to map and periodically update information on the various

open space lands and facilities within the City, its SOI and immediate vicinity.

Policy 2
Where appropriate, incorporate identified hazard zones (earthquake fault lines, floodways and floodplains, steep or unstable slopes, etc.) into the land use map, designating these areas as open space.

Program 2.A
Assess and identify appropriate areas of the community for preservation as public or private, passive and active open space for consideration for future inclusion into the City's system of Open Space and Conservation Lands.

Policy 3
With the approval of the local utilities, service providers and Coachella Valley Water District, the City shall maximize use of flood control and utility easement areas for inclusion in a multi-use trail system providing alternative transportation links to parks and open space areas.

Program 3.A
Confer and coordinate with the Coachella Valley Water District and utility purveyors to, as practical, integrate a multiple-use trail system that links City parks with open space and conservation areas.

Policy 4
Investigate and, if feasible, facilitate the development of a public land trust or similar mechanism to preserve environmentally sensitive open space and conservation lands.

Program 4.A
Investigate and, if appropriate, participate with CVAG and its members in the establishment of a public land trust to preserve environmentally sensitive open space and conservation lands and provide a mechanism for gifts and bequests of land to the trust.

Program 4.B
Assist a public land trust or similar private non-profit entity in pursuing private funding, as well as state and federal grants, loans and other assistance for acquisition, preservation and management of open space and conservation lands.

Policy 5
Adopt amendments to the Zoning Ordinance which encourage the provision of open space areas through flexible development standards.

Program 5.A
Adopt and implement flexible development policies, standards, and guidelines, that encourage the provision of quality open space amenities within new residential subdivisions and planned developments. These policies, standards and guidelines shall be incorporated into the City Zoning Ordinance and other appropriate regulatory documents.

Policy 6
As necessary, adopt amendments to the City's comprehensive grading ordinance that will protect and conserve open space and natural resources (also see Geotechnical Element).

Program 6.A
Adopt amendments to the City's comprehensive grading ordinance that protects hillsides and other open space and natural resource conservation areas, which reflect sensitivity to topographic and scenic qualities, wildlife resources, water or mineral resources and air quality.

ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Energy and Mineral Resources Element addresses the need for conservation, diverse development and thoughtful use and management of energy and mineral resources. All minerals and most energy resources are finite and limited. The household demand for energy resources in Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley is relatively high and escalating energy prices have placed serious burdens on residents and businesses alike. The purpose of this element is to set forth goals, policies and programs which are responsive to the community's dependency on these limited natural resources. Issues of resource production, transmission and use are also set forth in the element, as are the major opportunities faced by the city and regional governments for more local control of these resources.

This element quantifies current (1996) energy usage, and mineral resource location and identification. This element helps define and establish mineral resource zones, and existing energy resources and consumption patterns, in an effort to preserve and expand these important resources and determine how they can be most effectively managed. Policies and programs serve as tools to insure the preservation and management of these resources and discourage premature or inappropriate conversion of mineral and/or energy resources zones to incompatible uses.

BACKGROUND

The Energy and Mineral Resources Element is directly related to several other elements, including Land Use, Open Space and Conservation, Circulation, Air Quality, Housing, Economic Development as well as other elements. A wide range of state and federal legislation and regulation are applicable to energy and mineral resource issues, including California Government Code Section 65560(b), which directs cities and counties to provide for the preservation of energy and mineral resource areas, as well as other resources. As discussed below, these requirements have direct application to the City Sphere-of-Influence, where important mineral and energy resources have already been identified. Government Code Section 65302(d) requires that General Plans include elements that address issues of resource conservation, and sets forth the areas that may be addressed, including reclamation, prevention of resource degradation and their preservation for long-term use.

The regulation of mineral resources is also extensively addressed in various sections of the Public Resources Code, including Sections 2762, 2763 and 2764. Also, Government Code Section 65303 allows the local jurisdiction to add any other resource conservation/ management subjects that, in its opinion, relate to the physical development of the City.

Some of the state regulations affecting mineral and energy resources include Title 24 building standards to reduce unnecessary energy use in new or substantially remodeled construction, and the State Solar Rights Act and Solar Shade Control Act meant to enhance the opportunities for the use of solar energy. These and the above referenced code sections may be incorporated into the General Plan.

Minerals are considered to be any naturally occurring chemical elements or compounds formed from inorganic processes and organic substances, including iron, sand and gravel, limestone, coal and peat, but not including natural gas or petroleum. The importance of mineral deposits and their utilization is dependent upon their relative abundance and importance in commerce and industry. deposits of rare or important industrial materials require careful consideration before their availability is precluded by urban development.

Energy resources are integral in residential, commercial and industrial land uses, and especially in transportation. Relatively high regional energy costs, a highly competitive economic environment, and substantial opportunities for conservation encourage the development and use of alternative energy resources. The overall quality of our air and the health of our ecosystems are dependent upon sensitive choices of energy production, use and conservation.

The Coachella Valley is located in an area with high mean annual temperatures, creating a substantial need

for air conditioning and related electrical energy demand. To a lesser extent, the Valley also consumes large quantities of natural gas for space heat and hot water for homes and businesses, to provide industrial process heat, and to prepare food.

Energy Resource Consumption

Precise figures on per capita or per household consumption of electricity and natural gas in the Coachella Valley are not available and vary significantly with use. Nonetheless, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has developed a set of assumptions to define the general level of energy consumption on a use basis. Residential energy users, the City's largest consumer segment, on average utilize approximately 79,000 cubic feet of natural gas, and 6,000 kilowatt hours (KWH) per household per year.

With the minor exception of electrical energy being generated from nuclear and renewable resources, non-renewable fossil fuels are depended upon for the generation of electricity, the heating of homes, and the operation of vehicles is dependent upon non-renewable resources. In addition to reducing the long-term availability of these important resources, the burning of fossil fuels is directly associated with the production of air pollutants, hazardous waste materials and global warming.

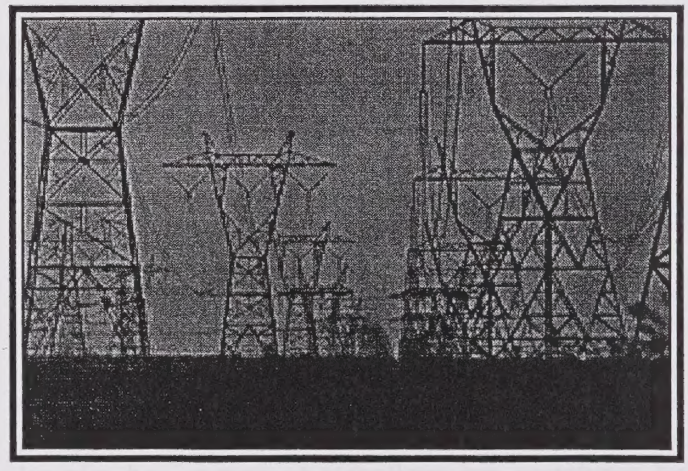
ELECTRIC POWER SERVICES

Cost-competitive electrical power is essential to the community if it is to attract new residents, business and industry. The cost of electricity can have a substantial impact on business, and its affordability through reasonable rates and energy conservation incentives is essential to the continued growth of the Rancho Mirage business and industrial sectors. The impact of the high cost of electrical energy is further compounded by air conditioning needs during summer months. In Rancho Mirage, electric power services are provided primarily by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE), with a limited portion of the northeast quadrant of the City also within the service district of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). Electricity is transmitted to the City primarily through high voltage lines and step-down transformers at the Devers substation near Desert Hot Springs and substations located within the City. Currently, there is no power generation within the City.

Southern California Edison

SCE is the primary electric service provider in the City and Sphere planning areas. High voltage transmission lines deliver power to the SCE substation located at the northwest corner of Monterey Avenue and Clancy Lane, where power is stepped down and distributed through lower voltage lines. Individual homes and businesses then receive power through a final transformer which brings voltages down to useful levels.

Each year, residential users are offered various rebates for the installation of energy efficient equipment. Several rebates offered by SCE include: refunds for the replacement of a "through-the-wall" heat pump; the installation or replacement of a central electric air conditioner; the replacement of a central electric heat pump; and the replacement of a heat pump water heater, to name a few. Another program called Automatic Power Shift allows substantial savings from June through September, in exchange for SCE to remotely "cycle-off" selected air conditioning units during peak period of heavy use and potential power outages.



Imperial Irrigation District

There are several advantages associated with being within IID's service boundaries, including electric power rates that are significantly less than those of the Southern California Edison Company. IID is also not subject to the regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission and has substantially greater flexibility in

establishing power rates and negotiating with individual users.

IID is in the process (1996) of evaluating its power rate structure and the District expects that these new rates will be lower than current levels. The District is also looking for opportunities to integrate gas-powered co-generation facilities into industrial uses. In these cases, electricity generating natural gas powered turbines, typically with capacities of two megawatts or greater, are integrated into an industrial operation. Their use can result in power costs to industrial users. This concept could be used to attract light industrial users to those industrial lands located within IID's service area.

IID Future Planning

Staff at the IID have indicated that they will be glad to work with both the City and individual developers on extensions of service and cost-effective methods of connecting to their grid. The District will also provide technical assistance on the integration of electrical systems and, especially, co-generation technologies and associated thermal energy users. The District is working on programs that may expand the technical assistance side of its operation. These are expected to be in place in the coming year.

NATURAL GAS SERVICE

Natural gas is found in association with petroleum crude oil deposits and is transported throughout the country through high pressure transmission lines. It is generally considered a clean and efficient fuel, but nonetheless emits a wide range of air pollutants. On average, the typical household energy consumer uses approximately 6,600 cubic feet of natural gas per dwelling unit per month. Gas service is available to commercial, industrial and residential users in the City, with costs varying with seasons and amount of use. Natural gas has also been adopted as the fuel of choice by the Sunline Transit Authority, which now operates its entire fleet on compressed natural gas (CNG). College of The Desert has even added an educational certificate program in the repair and maintenance of CNG vehicles, providing the first such college-level certification in California.

The General Plan study area is located within the service district of the Southern California Gas Company (The Gas Company). The Gas Company has by far the most sophisticated and detailed technical assistance and incentive program of all energy service providers serving the City. Service planners and technical expertise from the Gas Company's various service divisions are available to assist in addressing a wide range of use issues, including land use master planning, service extension and use-specific technical consulting/ problem-solving. A brief summary of the various services available from the Gas Company are provided below.

Gas Company Energy Management Programs

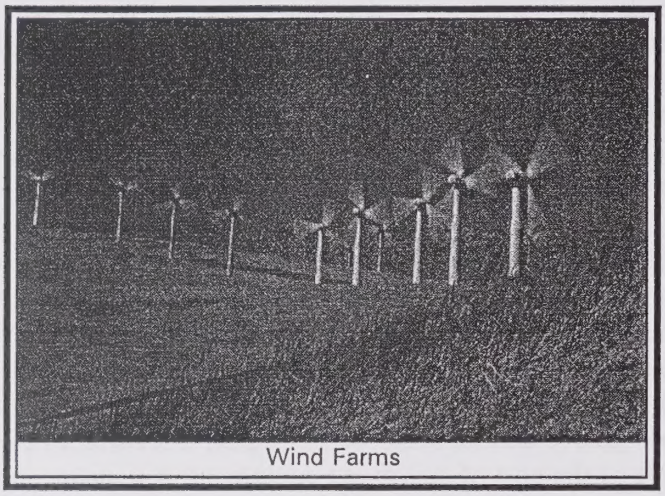
The Gas Company has developed a wide range of energy management, conservation and equipment retrofit programs for its customer base. These programs include core nonresidential customers equipment rebates up to 20% of the cost of qualifying equipment. Assistance in facilities planning and analysis is also provided to maximize energy efficiency and cost-effective equipment purchases and operations. The Gas Company's Air Quality Assistance Program provides detailed information on current and anticipated air quality requirements and helps users through the regulatory compliance maze, including the permitting process. Business partnerships are also facilitated, with an "Export Hotline" and market research available. The Gas Company also helps in the development of new technologies and process solutions primarily for industry.

LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES

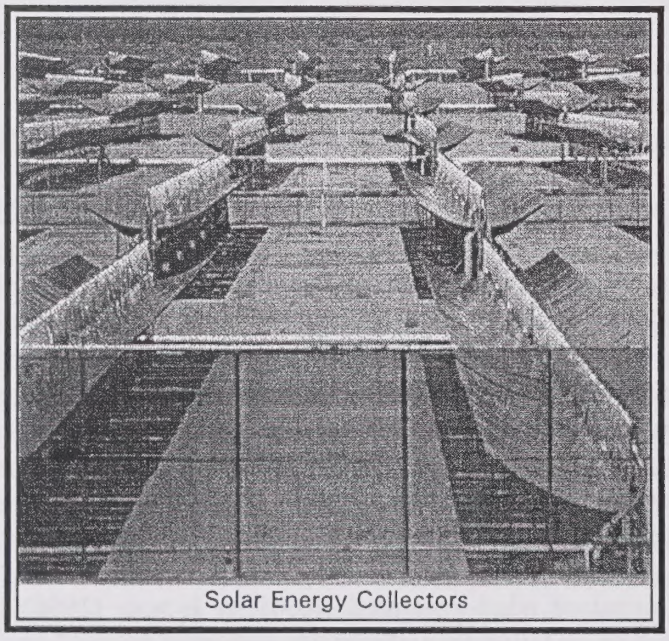
Important renewable energy resources in the Coachella Valley include abundant sunshine and high temperatures, and the San Gorgonio Wind Resource Area in the vicinity of the San Gorgonio Pass and extending into the City's Sphere-of-Influence. The San Gorgonio Wind Resource Study and subsequent analysis delineate those portions of the wind resource area that offer an economically viable (developable) wind resource.

The cost of wind-generated electricity is now (1996) equal to or lower than electricity generated by coal or natural gas. It is generally conceded that the true costs of energy from fossil or nuclear fuels are not yet fully factored into their market price. The performance of commercial-scale turbine development on the western

slope of Edom Hill, immediately west of the sphere area, would appear to indicate that the northern areas of the City may prove viable for future commercial-scale wind turbine development.


Wind Farms

The costs of producing and installing solar photovoltaic systems, which involve the direct conversion of sunshine to electricity, have been dramatically reduced in recent years but are still primarily used for special applications, including powering remote locations.


Solar Energy Collectors

Solar thermal systems have meanwhile been in use all over the world for many years and are widely applied in the Coachella Valley to provide domestic hot water and to heat swimming pools. Passive solar designs are also being used to provide natural lighting and space heating. Rancho Mirage is well situated to take advantage of the continued emergence and refinement of solar technologies, with intense solar insolation for both solar thermal and photovoltaic systems. These technologies are also expected to become integral to the emergence of a hydrogen fuel cycle, which could result in virtually pollution-free electric power and combustion fuel.

MINERAL RESOURCES

The nonrenewable character of mineral deposits requires their careful and efficient development to prevent unnecessary waste or exploitation. The excavation of mineral resources can also have significant environmental impacts that may only be marginally mitigated by surface mining reclamation plans. Evidence of mining, particularly surface mining in desert areas, can remain for centuries if not properly reclaimed through extensive importing of fill, grading, and replanting.

In the Coachella Valley, the deep fault-controlled valley has filled in with eroded materials from the surrounding hills and mountains to a depth in excess of 12,000 feet within the planning area. As a consequence, the mineral resources of the desert floor are limited to sands and gravel, important deposits of which occur within the City's Sphere-of-Influence and are actively being developed. Other mineral deposits occurring in the region include copper, limestone, specialty sands, and tungsten. These deposits are limited to rocky outcroppings occurring in the Little San Bernardino and Santa Rosa Mountains and have not been exploited.

Locally Important Mineral Resources

In 1988, the State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology released a report identifying aggregate materials in the Palm Springs Production-Consumption Region, which includes the City and its sphere-of-influence. The primary goal of the study was to identify regionally significant mineral deposits in an effort to conserve and develop them, in order to meet anticipated aggregate production needs of the region.

Three mineral resource categories are applicable to the City and its sphere-of-influence:

MRZ-1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.

MRZ-2: Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists.

MRZ-3: Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.

As shown on state mineral resources maps, within the corporate boundaries of the City only the MRZ-1 and MRZ-3 zones are identified. Within the sphere-of-influence, an area of MRZ-2 is identified in Section 1, which coincides with an existing mining operation of aggregate base. This is a lower quality aggregate that is commonly used in road beds; however, it is considered by the State Division of Mines and Geology as a significant resource. The remaining area of the Sphere-of-Influence is MRZ-3 zone.

The conclusions of the state study indicate that existing aggregate resources will only meet 43 percent of the aggregate demand in the Palm Springs Production-Consumption Region over the next 50 years. This necessitates the establishment of new resources for mining or utilization of alternative resources.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Steadily increasing economic and environmental costs associated with energy production and use are forcing communities and countries to develop new energy policies and programs. The various constraints that have emerged can also be viewed as opportunities for economic development and environmental enhancement. Lowering demand will help to control costs and require power generators to operate more efficiently and price their product more competitively. Encouraging the development and use of alternative and renewable energy can also expand economic opportunity.

The community has an important and meaningful role in encouraging the wise use of energy resources.

The City also has an important long-term role in helping assure the availability of important sand and gravel resources located in the Sphere. Future resource needs must be kept in mind when land use or development planning has the potential to adversely affect these important mineral resources.

ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Conservation and thoughtful management of energy sources and mineral deposits to regulate the demand for and assure the long-term viability of limited and non-renewable resources.

Policy 1
The City shall promote energy conservation in all areas of community development, including transportation, development planning, public and private sector office construction and operation, as well as in the full range of commercial and industrial projects.

Program 1.A
The City shall participate in the energy management and conservation efforts of Sunline Transit Authority and encourage the expanded use of compressed natural gas, buses with bike racks, and other system improvements which enhance overall energy conservation.

Program 1.B
The City shall plan for and facilitate the development of a Citywide and regional bike path system to provide visitors and residents with non-vehicular alternatives for travel to work, convenience shopping, and recreating.

Policy 2
The General Plan and other community plans shall assure an efficient circulation system and land use pattern in the City, which minimizes travel.

Program 2.A
Community land use and transportation planning and design shall assure the provision of convenient neighborhood shopping, medical and other professional services appropriately located to minimize travel and facilitate the use of alternative means of transportation.

Policy 3
Major mixed use developments, which provide significant employment centers, shall be required to provide convenient and safe access to the public transit system.

Policy 4
The City shall pro-actively support the affordable and reliable production and delivery of electrical power to the community.

Program 4.A
The City shall investigate and pursue the various options available to influence or directly manage the purchasing and distribution of electrical power to the various segments of the community, including regular consultation with SCE and IID, and participation in a public power authority.

Policy 5
The City shall support public and private efforts to develop and operate alternative systems of thermal and electrical production, which take advantage of local renewable resources.

Program 5.A
The City shall assign land use and zoning designations to appropriate lands on Edom Hill to allow and facilitate their development as windfarms to the extent practical, consistent with the City's standards regarding viewshed protection.

Program 5.B
The City shall support and facilitate the integration of co-generation and other energy management systems into larger industrial and commercial operations in the City to enhance operational efficiencies and provide additional opportunities for local power production.

Policy 5.C
The City shall, to the extent practical, monitor and regulate development in the vicinity of significant mineral resources occurring within the City, its Sphere-of-Influence and the vicinity.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER V

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

This chapter of the General Plan addresses those man-made and natural environmental hazards which occur in the City of Rancho Mirage and surrounding areas. General Plan elements discussed under this chapter include Geotechnical, Flooding and Hydrology, Noise, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials. The assessment of and planning for these hazards or constraints is the primary purpose of this chapter of the General Plan.

GEOTECHNICAL ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Geotechnical Element is to provide information, as well as goals, policies and programs to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the City from seismic and other geotechnical hazards, and to educate the community and its residents about seismic and related geologic hazards. The Element is also meant to satisfy the requirements of state law, including the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (amended). The Element and its supporting documentation are also intended to provide a regularly updated information database on geotechnical hazards affecting the region, which will serve as the basis for ongoing land use policies and decisions.

BACKGROUND

Other General Plan elements that are directly or indirectly related to the Geotechnical Element include Land Use, Emergency Preparedness, Circulation, Housing, Public Utilities, Economic Development, and Public Buildings and Facilities. The Emergency Preparedness Element of the General Plan is one most directly related to the seismic safety issues embodied in the element. Many of the procedures, plans, programs and policies in that element are logical extensions of the Geotechnical Element. In this regard, the Flooding and Hydrology and Fire and Police Protection Elements are also closely related to seismic and geotechnical safety.

The City of Rancho Mirage and the General Plan study area are located at the northwestern extreme of the Salton Trough, which is the landward extension of the East Pacific Rise spreading ridge and transform fault system. This spreading ridge is creating new crust and is responsible for separating Baja California from mainland Mexico and creating the Gulf of California and the Imperial and Coachella Valleys. This spreading action is also responsible for moving the Pacific Plate to the northwest relative to the North American Plate at the rate of about 50 mm per year.

Movement along these two tectonic plates is responsible for the earthquakes that occur in Southern California, with about 70 percent of this movement being accommodated by the San Andreas Fault Zone.

The General Plan study area straddles two physiographic provinces; the valley floor and Indio Hills in the north are part of the Colorado Desert province, and the Santa Rosa Mountains are part of the Peninsular Range province. The valley floor is a tectonic (fault controlled) depression that began forming about 5 million years ago and in the study area has been filled with nearly 13,000 feet of sediment (some of marine origin) washed down from surrounding mountains. In the vicinity of the U.S./Mexico border this spreading and sediment infilling is up to 40,000 feet deep.

Applicable Legislation

Requirements for the development of an element addressing seismic safety issues are found in both the California Government Code and Public Resources Code. Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that the General Plan address the need to protect the community from unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, seiching, dam failure, subsidence and other known geologic hazards. In accordance with Government Code Section 65303, the City General Plan may also address other subjects related to the physical development of the community, as provided through Flooding and Hydrology, Emergency Preparedness and other Elements of this Plan.

The most important piece of legislation related to this Element is the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, which is found in Public Resources Code Sections 2621 et. seq. The location of these study zones must be disclosed to the general public through the use of maps and other appropriate materials (Title 14, California Administrative Code Section 3603 (b)).

Finally, Government Code Section 8876 establishes a program by which the City and all other jurisdictions located within the most severe seismic zone shaking (Zone 4), as set forth in Chapter 2-23 of Part 2 of Title 24 of the Administrative Code, shall identify all potentially hazardous or substandard buildings and shall

establish a program for the mitigation of these buildings' inadequacies.

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

Previously known as the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act adopted in 1972, its primary purpose is to mitigate the hazards associated with fault rupture by prohibiting the location of structures for human occupancy across the trace of an active fault. Earthquake fault zones, which are sufficiently active and well-defined, have been designated on maps prepared by the State Division of Mines and Geology. Study area boundaries range from 200 to 500 feet on either side of an active fault, depending on whether it is a minor or major fault. The Act defines active faults as those that have evidenced movement during the past 11,000 years (Holocene epoch).

The Act requires that the City withhold the issuance of development permits within an active fault zone until geologic investigations are conducted that demonstrate that sites are not threatened by surface displacement from future faulting. The Banning Branch of the San Andreas Fault Zone passes through the extreme northeast corner of the City Sphere-of-Influence and is the only fault occurring within the study area that is located within a state designated special studies zone. This fault and others with the potential to cause damage in the City are discussed further below.

Geotechnical Conditions in the Rancho Mirage Region

Located along one of the most active tectonic boundaries on the globe, the Coachella Valley (and Southern California region) is susceptible to a wide range of hazards associated with geotechnical conditions. Recent studies indicate that far too few earthquakes have occurred in Southern California in the last 200 years to account for the rate of movement between the Pacific and North American plates. The data suggest that the region will be subject to either numerous moderate earthquakes (such as the Northridge quake) or a few large (Magnitude 7.2 or larger) earthquakes.

Therefore, the City and the region must factor in these geologic threats in the development of appropriate policies and programs.

Geologic Units, Basement Rocks, Alluvium and Sand

In addition to the tectonic forces acting on the Rancho Mirage area, geologic hazards and geotechnical constraints are also affected by the characteristics of the rocks and sediments that underlie the area. These are comprised of Holocene surficial sediments deposited within the last 11,000 years on the valley floor, Pleistocene sediments of the Indio Hills deposited between 11,000 and 1.6 million years ago, and Mesozoic and older rocks of the Santa Rosa Mountains with an age of 80 million years or older.

Sediments that cover the valley floor can be classified as either stream-deposited (alluvium), or wind-deposited (aeolian). The windblown or aeolian deposits typically consist of reworked alluvium, which have been picked up by strong winds and redistributed as silty, fine to medium-grained sands that now form sand dunes and sand fields. A thick accumulation of these windblown sands, known as the Palm Springs Sand Ridge, has formed a broad, elongated and southeast trending ridge in the central part of the planning area, which rises as much as 120 feet above the surrounding desert floor.

The valley floor deposits are underlain by consolidated and semi-consolidated sedimentary rock, which are in turn underlain by bedrock similar to that exposed in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains. The only exposed semi-consolidated sedimentary unit is the Ocotillo Conglomerate, which can be seen on Edom Hill and Flat-top Mountain, where it has been uplifted as a result of movement along the Banning Branch and Garnet Hill Faults. In the Edom Hill area, the Ocotillo Conglomerate is approximately 2,400 feet thick.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains consist of metamorphic rocks of an unknown age that have been modified by heat and pressure far below the surface. These rocks have subsequently been intruded by Early to Late Cretaceous (80 to 120 million years old) crystalline rocks of the Peninsular Range batholith that have lent these mountains their complex and varied character.

The principal metamorphic rocks are probably derived from ancient marine sediments. There are also remnants of older alluvial fan surfaces located at the upper reaches of several of the City's existing alluvial fans. A more

detailed discussion of the engineering characteristics of these various geologic units can be found in the General Plan Program EIR and the geotechnical report found in the EIR appendices.

Measurements of the Seismic Hazards in Rancho Mirage

As discussed below, earthquakes are classified by their magnitude and by their intensity. The intensity of seismic ground shaking is a function of several factors, including the magnitude of the quake, distance from the epicenter, and the local geologic and topographic conditions. Analysis of the San Andreas Fault earthquake potential indicates that in a major seismic event the City generally lies within intensity zones IX through XI, as defined in the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (see below). This intensity range can result in partial or complete collapse of typical masonry buildings, heavy or total destruction of frame buildings and their foundations, serious to complete destruction of underground pipelines, bending of rail lines, land and rock slides, and damage or destruction of bridges and overpasses.

The largest or maximum credible earthquake a fault is capable of generating is used for community planning purposes. Maximum seismic design parameter values, including peak ground or bedrock acceleration, duration of strong ground shaking, and period of ground motion (frequency), are derived from maximum credible earthquakes to establish safety margins. These potential effects associated with local faults are discussed below.

Richter Scale

Faulting and ground rupture, or the breakage of bedrock and overlying sediments, along tectonic plate boundaries, and associated ground acceleration or motion, are the most significant potential geotechnical hazards affecting the General Plan study area. Earthquakes are typically defined by their magnitude as measured on the Richter Scale. Each whole number step in magnitude on the scale represents a tenfold increase in the amplitude of the waves on a seismogram and about a 31-fold increase in energy released. As an example, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake is 31 times more powerful than a 6.5 magnitude quake.

Seismic Intensity and the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale

The Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (MMIS) is a more useful measure of the damage potential of earthquakes, and is based upon people's reactions to a quake, and observed damage to structures and other physical effects. There are twelve levels of intensity in this scale, ranging from I (tremor not felt) to XII (damage is nearly total). The effects of a quake on masonry and other buildings are an important part of characterizing the intensity using this scale.

Major Active Faults and Their Potential Effects in the Rancho Mirage Area

It is all too well known that earthquakes can cause substantial property damage, the loss of public services and facilities and loss of life. Strong shaking from an earthquake can result in landslides, ground lurching, structural damage or destruction, and liquefaction. Strong shaking can also set in motion other hazards, including fires, disruption of essential facilities and systems (water, sewer, gas, electric, transportation, communications, irrigation and drainage systems), releases of hazardous materials, and flood inundation as a result of dam or water tank failure.

Major Fault Hazards in the Rancho Mirage Area

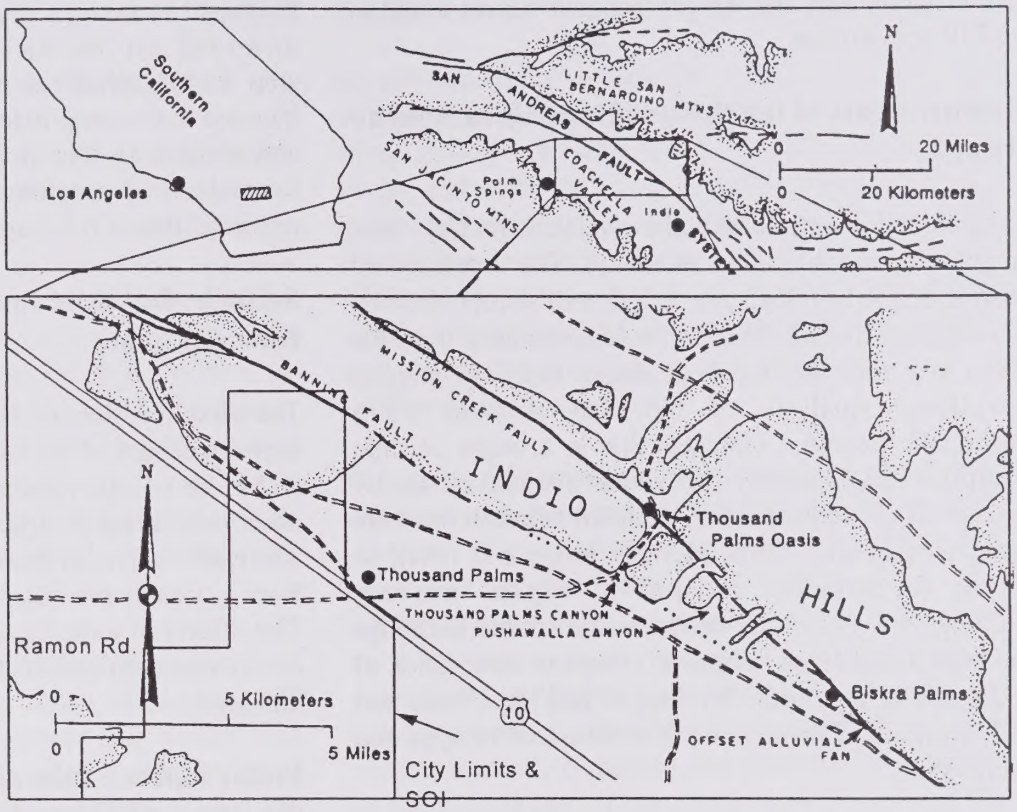


Figure 1. Map of Indio Hills area. *Modified from Norris and others, 1979.*

Ground shaking during an earthquake is the most significant seismic hazard that will impact the Rancho Mirage planning area. Critical parameters include distance between the fault and various points in the City, the maximum credible earthquake each fault is capable of generating, the intensity of ground shaking expressed as a fraction of the acceleration of gravity (g), and the Modified Mercalli (MM) seismic intensity values that have been calculated for the City. In general, peak ground accelerations and seismic intensity values decrease with increasing distance from the causative fault. However, local site conditions, such as the top of ridges, may amplify the seismic waves generated by an earthquake, resulting in higher accelerations than those discussed below.

An effective seismic hazard reduction program, therefore, should include the identification and mapping of geologic and seismic hazards, the enforcement of building and fire codes, and the expedient retrofitting and rehabilitation of weak structures. Programs should also be developed to help City residents to provide for themselves and their families in the aftermath of an earthquake.

San Andreas Fault Zone

The San Andreas Fault Zone is the principal boundary between the Pacific and North American plates and locally has been divided into several segments. The *San Bernardino Mountains segment* is a structurally complex zone northwest of the City and is accommodated by several subparallel fault strands, the most important of these being the Mission Creek, San Gorgonio and Banning Faults. It is suggested that fault ruptures along the San Gorgonio branch can cause simultaneous rupture along the Banning Fault. Movement along this segment is estimated at approximately 24 ±5 mm/yr., with an average earthquake recurrence interval of 146 years. More recently, since the year 1192 there have been six ruptures on this segment averaging once every 106 years. The most recent surface-rupturing earthquake on this segment is thought to have occurred in 1812, 183 years ago. It is estimated that this segment has a 28 percent

probability of rupturing in the time period between 1994 and 2024.

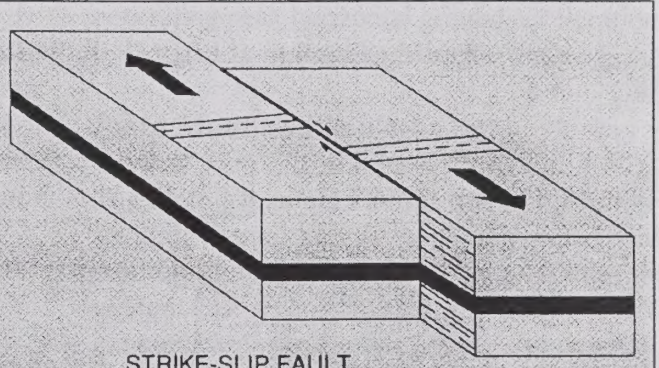
The *Banning Branch* consists of three segments with activity appearing to have shifted eastward over time. A Magnitude 7.5 earthquake on the Banning fault is considered capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations of up to 0.73g in the City. Even higher accelerations can be expected on Edom Hill and immediately adjacent to the fault in the northern portion of the City SOI.

The *Mission Creek Branch,* located immediately north of the Banning Branch, could generate a maximum credible quake of Magnitude 8.0 and is estimated capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations in the City of between 0.15 and 0.3g.

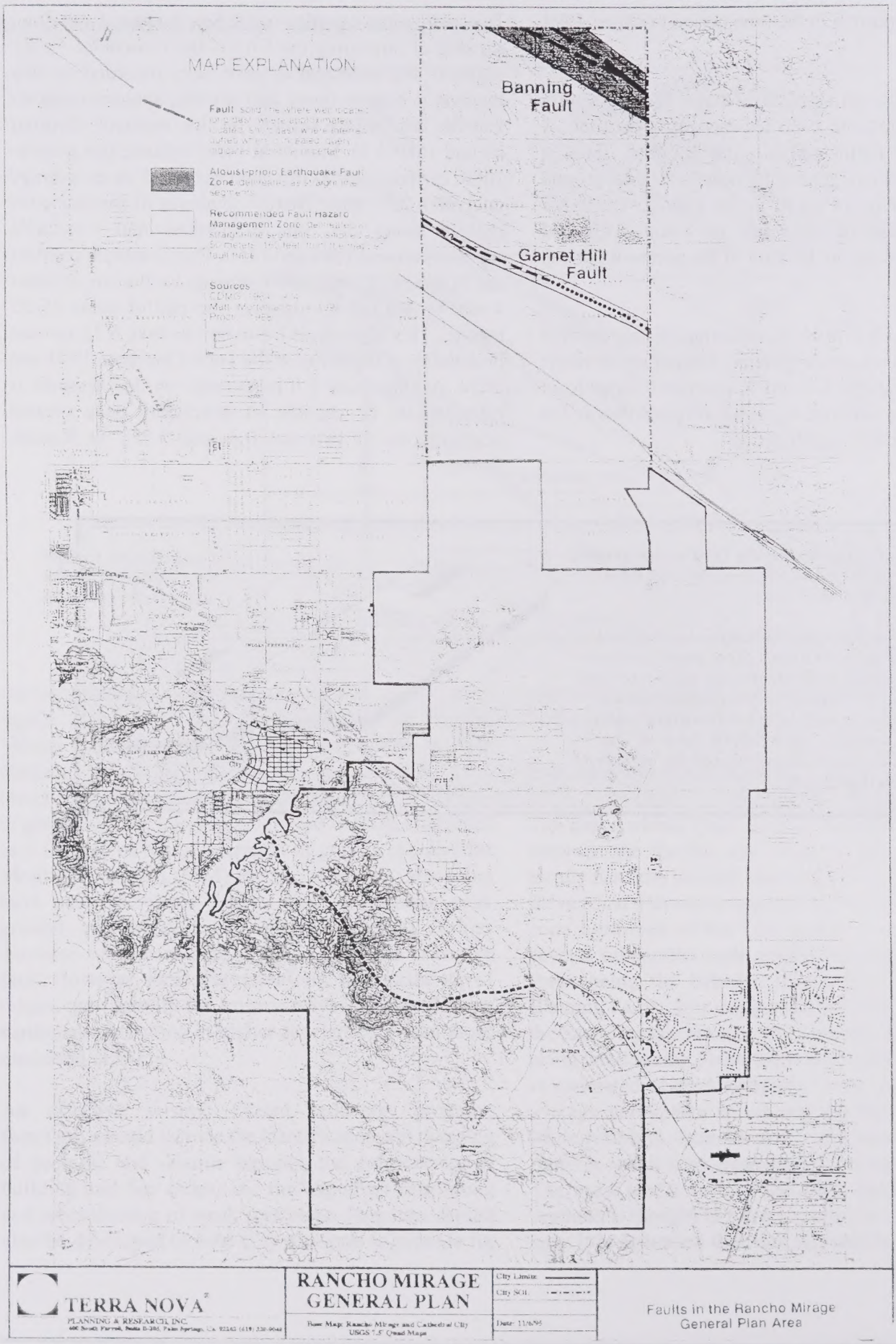
The southernmost portion of the San Andreas Fault Zone capable of impacting the City is the *Coachella Valley segment*. No earthquakes have been recorded on this segment in historic times, and ongoing analysis suggests that the last surface rupture on this segment occurred around 1680 A.D. Studies at Indio indicate that prior to 1680, earthquakes on this fault occurred on an average interval of 220 years. There is evidence of simultaneous rupture along the San Bernardino and Coachella segments around 1680 and 1450. The Coachella segment has experienced creep (slow slippage) at the rate of about 4 mm/yr. but has a long-term slip rate of about 25 ±5 mm/yr. This segment is estimated to have a 22 percent probability of rupturing in the period between 1994 and 2024. A Magnitude 8.0 earthquake on this segment is estimated to be capable of generating peak ground accelerations of between 0.3 and 0.55g in Rancho Mirage.

The movement along a **strike-slip fault** is approximately parallel to the strike of the fault, meaning the rocks move past each other horizontally.

The San Andreas is a strike-slip fault that has displaced rocks hundreds of miles. As a result of horizontal movement along the fault, rocks of vastly different age and composition have been placed side by side. The San Andreas fault is a fault zone rather than a single fault, and movement may occur along any of the many fault surfaces in the zone. The surface effects of the San Andreas fault zone can be observed for over 600 miles (1,000 km).



STRIKE-SLIP FAULT


MAP EXPLANATION
Fault
Alquist-priolo Earthquake Fault Zone
Recommended Fault Hazard Management Zone
Sources
Banning Fault
Garnet Hill Fault
TERRA NOVA
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.
RANCHO MIRAGE GENERAL PLAN
City Limits
City SOI
Date: 11/6/95
Faults in the Rancho Mirage General Plan Area

Garnet Hill Fault

The Garnet Hill Fault extends from the vicinity of Whitewater Canyon to the vicinity of Edom Hill. Its orientation and proximity to the San Andreas Fault suggests that the Garnet Hill Fault is associated with the San Andreas and has even been suggested as an ancestral branch of this fault. While not identified by the state as an active fault, ground fractures associated with the 1986 North Palm Springs earthquake were reported along the trace of this fault. The Garnet Hill Fault may not be capable of generating an earthquake, but given its display of compression and extension, it may act as a plane of weakness and move co-seismically in response to an earthquake on another, nearby fault. The City has the option and may wish to designate a Fault Hazard Management Zone along this fault to regulate future development planning.

Secondary Active Fault Zones

In addition to the major active fault branches associated with the San Andreas Fault Zone, there are numerous other active faults in the region that have the potential of impacting the City as a result of a major seismic event along these faults. Each of these secondary fault zones are briefly discussed below.

San Jacinto Fault Zone

The San Jacinto Fault Zone consists of a series of closely spaced faults that form the western margin of the San Jacinto Mountains. The fault zone extends from its junction with the San Andreas Fault in San Bernardino and runs southeasterly to Brawley and on to the U.S./Mexico border as the Imperial Fault. This active fault zone has generated at least ten moderate (Magnitude 6-7) earthquakes in the last 100 years. Two segments of this fault located closest to the City have a high (37 to 43 percent) probability of rupturing in the period from 1994 to 2024. A maximum credible earthquake of Magnitude 7.0 on any of the three closest segments of this fault is estimated to generate peak horizontal accelerations in the area of about 0.1 to 0.15g.

Blue Cut Fault

The Blue Cut Fault is an east-west trending fault located along the north flank of the Eagle Mountains. This fault appears to be accommodating some of the north-south compression that results from the "big bend" in the San Andreas Fault north of Los Angeles. It is considered one of the major active surface faults in Southern California but with very long recurrence intervals. An earthquake along this fault is estimated to be capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations of between 0.1 and 0.2g in the City.

Johnson Valley Fault

The June, 1992 Magnitude 7.6 Landers Earthquake occurred on the Johnson Valley Fault and was strongly felt in the Rancho Mirage area. It is a northwest trending fault that, in conjunction with nearby parallel faults, is accommodating between 9 and 23 percent of the movement between the Pacific and North American plates. Trenching indicates that this fault last ruptured about 9,000 years ago. An earthquake of Magnitude 7.5 on this or nearby faults is estimated to be capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations of about 0.07 to 0.13g in Rancho Mirage.

Pinto Mountain Fault

The Pinto Mountain Fault is one of the major east-west trending faults, known to be associated with the San Andreas Fault to the southwest. While there is no evidence of recent faulting, the fault is active and did experience sympathetic ground ruptures due to the Landers Earthquake. The Pinto Mountain Fault is estimated to be capable of producing a maximum credible earthquake of 7.4, and could generate a peak horizontal ground acceleration of 0.16g in the northern reaches of the planning area.

Other Seismically Induced Geologic Hazards

In addition to direct effects such as ground rupture and ground acceleration, there are other seismically induced hazards that can injure people and damage structures. These hazards include liquefaction, dynamic settlement, ground fracturing or fissuring, lateral spreads, slumps, landslides, and earth or rock falls. Each of these is briefly discussed below.

Liquefaction

Liquefaction may occur when loose, unconsolidated, saturated, sandy soils are subjected to ground vibrations during a seismic event. This occurs in areas where the ground water table is within 50 feet of the ground surface and that are subject to Modified Mercalli Intensity values of VII or greater. Significant ground shaking can suddenly increase water pressure in the pores between soil particles and cause soils to lose cohesion and to "liquefy". Effects include a loss of bearing strength, ground oscillations, lateral spreading and slumping. This hazard is considered low in the Rancho Mirage area, principally because of the approximate depth of 150 to 200 feet to ground water.

Seismically Induced Settlement

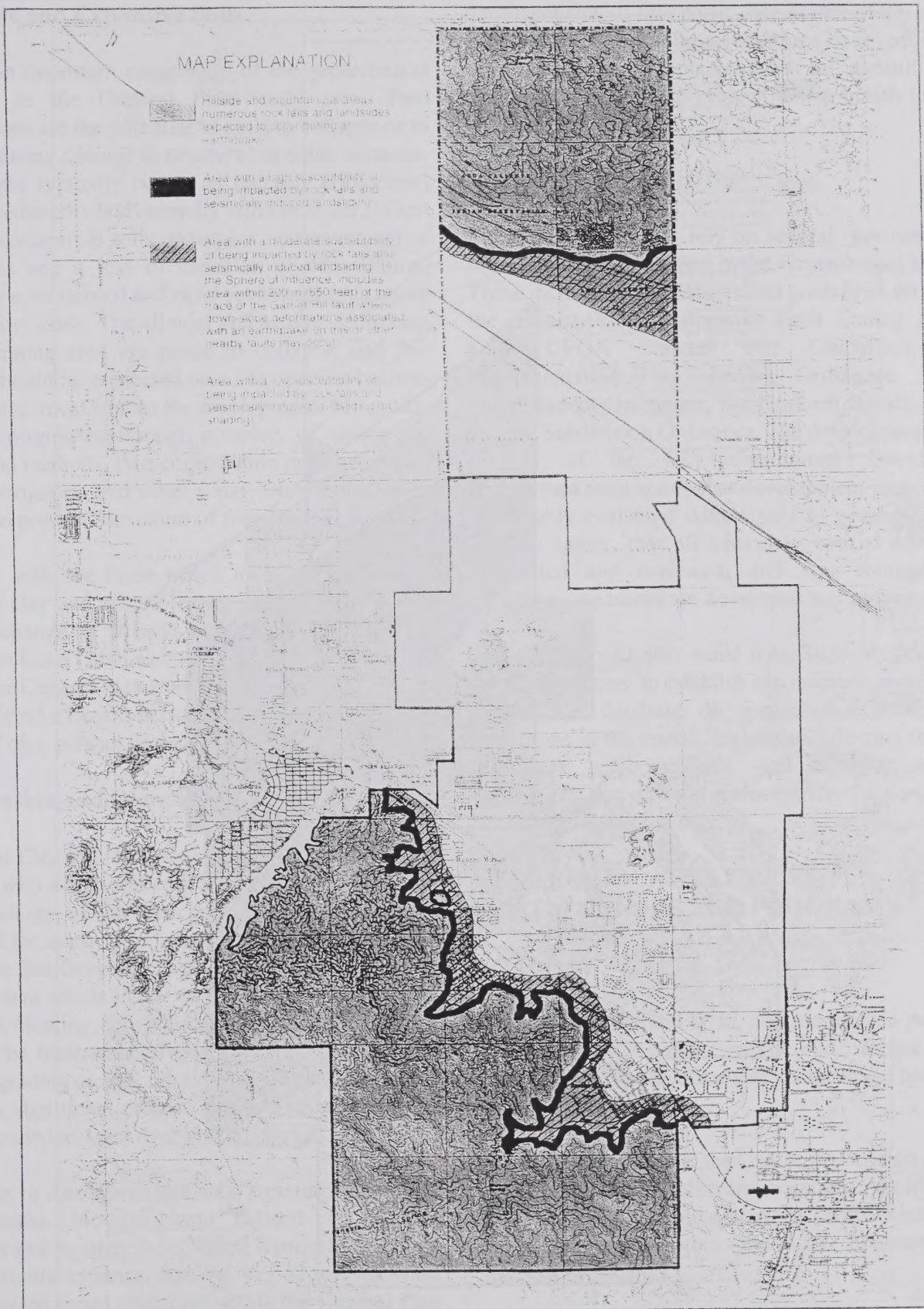
Under some circumstances, strong ground shaking can cause densification or compaction of soils resulting in local or regional settlement of the ground surface. This can result in local differential settlement and damage to foundations and structures, as well as damage to water and sewer lines. This potential is affected by the intensity and duration of ground shaking and the relative density of the subsurface soils. Windblown sands and other recently deposited sediments are typically loose and, therefore, potentially subject to seismically induced settlement. In the planning area, development on the valley floor, on wind or stream-deposited sediment should include site-specific subsurface geotechnical investigations that address this potential seismic hazard. Proper excavation, compaction and foundation design can accommodate some of the seismic settlement potential.

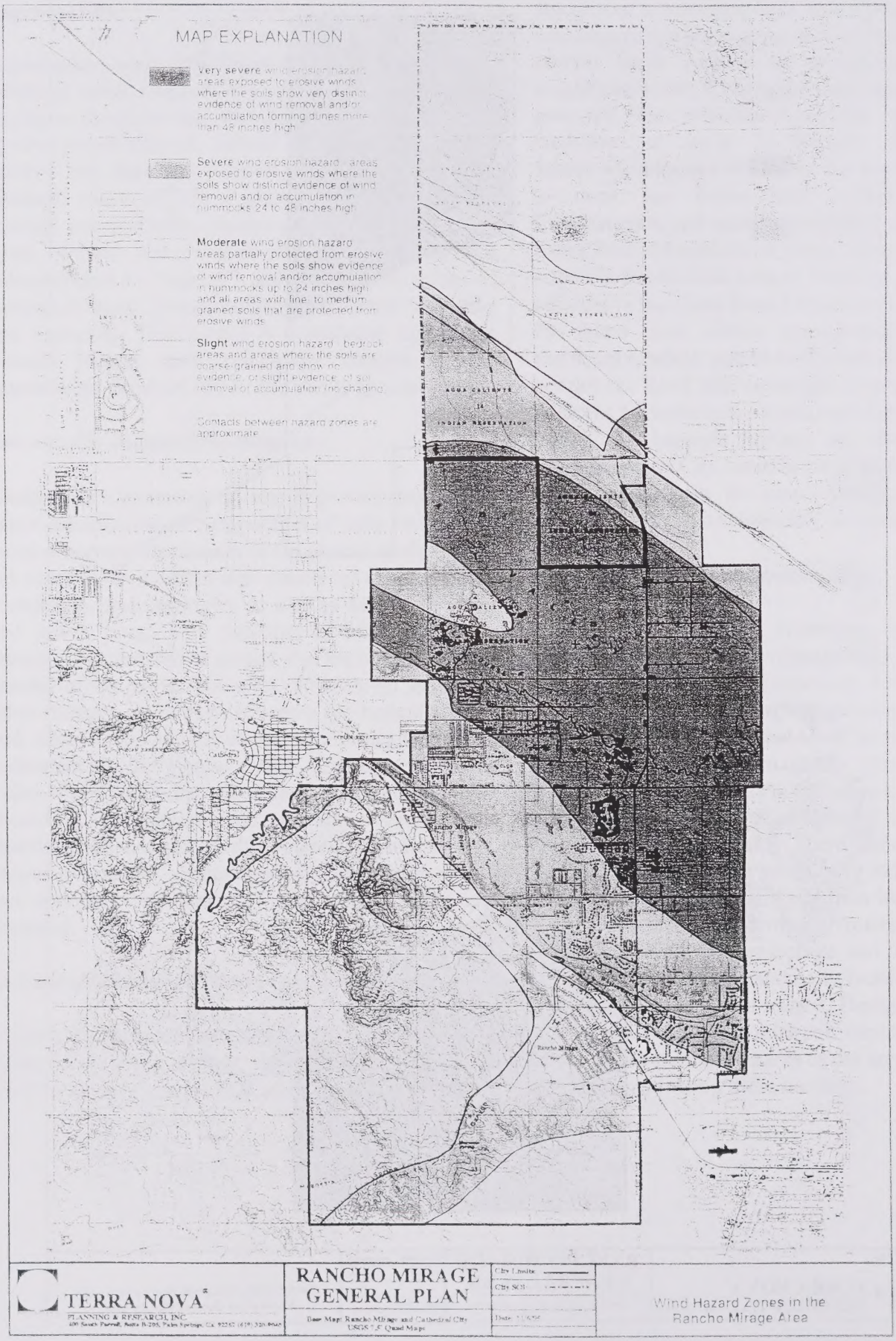
Seismically Induced Slope Instability

Seismically induced landslides and rock falls can be expected to occur on both the northern and southern portions of the General Plan study area. It is estimated that ground acceleration of at least 0.10g in steep terrain is necessary to induce earthquake-related rock falls. With several faults capable of generating peak ground accelerations over 0.10g in the study area, there is a high potential for seismically-induced rock falls and landslides to occur in Rancho Mirage and its Sphere-of-Influence. Fractures and landslides are likely to occur on Edom Hill, within the Ocotillo Conglomerate, and scattered rock falls could occur in the Santa Rosa Mountains in areas where the bedrock is intensely fractured or jointed. Sections of Highway 111 adjacent to the Santa Rosa Mountains could be blocked by fallen rock debris immediately following an earthquake, which would hinder rescue and evacuation operations. Rock falls could also impact developments adjacent to mountain slopes, especially those at the mouth of Magnesia Springs and Bradley Canyons. Throughout the City, manufactured slopes of significant height could also be susceptible to failure if not engineered to resist seismically induced failure.

Seismically Induced Inundation

Failure of water tanks, reservoirs, retention basins, recharge basins and other water storage structures can be caused by seismic events, especially in areas susceptible to ground failure. There are several above-ground water storage tanks in the City that could be subject to damage in an earthquake. Damage to these tanks could significantly hinder efforts to suppress fires and could greatly limit supply and availability of potable water after a major earthquake. There currently exist only limited opportunities for seismically induced inundation down-grade of stormwater retention basins in the City. The infrequency of stormwater retention, the limited likelihood of stormwater storage, and the occurrence of a major earthquake substantially reduces, but does not eliminate, this potential hazard. Design engineering of future major detention/retention facilities will need to focus on the seismic hazards of the area when planning for and constructing these facilities.


MAP EXPLANATION
Hillside and mountainous areas numerous rock falls and landslides expected to occur during an earthquake
Area with a high susceptibility of being impacted by rock falls and seismically induced landsliding
Area with a moderate susceptibility of being impacted by rock falls and seismically induced landsliding (in the Sphere of Influence, includes area within 200 m (650 feet) of the trace of the Garnet Hill fault where down-slope deformations associated with an earthquake on this or other nearby faults may occur)
Area with a low susceptibility of being impacted by rock falls and seismically induced landsliding (no shading)
TERRA NOVA
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.
RANCHO MIRAGE
GENERAL PLAN
City Limits
City SOI
Date: 11/6/95
Seismically Induced Rock Falls and
Landslide Susceptibility Map


MAP EXPLANATION
Very severe wind erosion hazard - areas exposed to erosive winds where the soils show very distinct evidence of wind removal and/or accumulation forming dunes more than 48 inches high.
Severe wind erosion hazard - areas exposed to erosive winds where the soils show distinct evidence of wind removal and/or accumulation in hummocks 24 to 48 inches high.
Moderate wind erosion hazard - areas partially protected from erosive winds where the soils show evidence of wind removal and/or accumulation in hummocks up to 24 inches high and all areas with fine- to medium-grained soils that are protected from erosive winds.
Slight wind erosion hazard - bedrock areas and areas where the soils are coarse-grained and show no evidence, or slight evidence, of soil removal or accumulation (no shading).
Contacts between hazard zones are approximate.
AGUA CALIENTE INDIAN RESERVATION
Rancho Mirage
TERRA NOVA
PLANNING & RESEARCH, INC.
RANCHO MIRAGE GENERAL PLAN
Base Maps: Rancho Mirage and Cathedral City USGS 7.5' Quad Maps
City Limits
City SOI
Date:
Wind Hazard Zones in the Rancho Mirage Area

Collapsible and Expansive Soils

Soils are an important component of the geotechnical conditions in the General Plan study area. Two considerations are the potential of soils to collapse or to expand, causing damage to structures in either instance. Soil collapse typically occurs in recently (Holocene) deposited sediments laid down by wind or water. When saturated, collapsible soils undergo a rearrangement of their grains and a loss of cohesion or cementation, resulting in a substantial and rapid settlement even under relatively low loads. The alluvial and aeolian sediments in the planning area are prone to collapse, and this potential should be evaluated on a site-specific basis as part of geotechnical studies for development. Mitigation can be accomplished through a variety of design and construction methods. Post-construction management of drainage, irrigation and other water sources should be designed to prevent saturation of foundation soils.

Expansive soils are those which include a significant amount of clay and are subject to swelling. Expansive soils can change in volume and can exert significant pressure on loads (such as buildings) that are placed on them. In the General Plan study area, expansive soils are not considered a hazard because of the relatively minor amount of clay present in the soils.

Wind Erosion and Blowsand

Most of the City and its Sphere-of-Influence are located in an area with a high susceptibility to wind erosion. The geomorphology of the Coachella Valley, its extreme aridity and the marine air masses funneled from the west through the San Gorgonio Pass conspire to create strong and persistent winds in the valley. These strong winds have been blowing and redistributing sand deposits in the area for thousands of years. Lands disturbed by flooding, grading or agricultural activities are, therefore, subject to significant erosive forces that suspend fine dust and transport sand over great distances.

In addition to damage to vehicles, structures and other improvements, blowing sand collects on streets, driveways and in other areas where it must be removed at considerable expense. Exhibit V-3 shows the wind erosion hazard zones occurring within the General Plan study area. Wind erosion and blowing sand also contribute to a significant health threat associated with the suspension of fine particulate matter of ten microns and smaller (PM_{10}). These conditions have required the development and implementation of a multifaceted mitigation plan to help protect human health (also see Air Quality Element).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City will need to rely on several mechanisms to address hazards identified in the Geotechnical Element. These include the regulations and guidelines set forth in the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, the State CEQA Statutes and Guidelines, PM_{10} Implementation Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Hillside Development Ordinance, the Uniform Building Code, and the Subdivision Ordinance. The development review process of the City Community Development Department must assure that development proposals are thoroughly evaluated with regard to geotechnical and seismic safety, that all necessary special studies are conducted and reviewed, and that comprehensive mitigation measures are developed and implemented.

The City should also work with State, Regional, and County agencies to establish and maintain an up-to-date information database on geotechnical and seismic conditions in the region, legislation affecting the City's regulatory responsibilities, and changing technical assessments that refine or recharacterize the geotechnical hazards affecting the region.

GEOTECHNICAL ELEMENT GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Minimized vulnerability to, and maximized protection of, the general health, safety and welfare of the community from the effects of geotechnical hazards.

Policy 1
Periodically confer with the California Division of Mines and Geology and establish and maintain maps illustrating the location of seismic and other geotechnical hazard zones occurring within the City boundaries and Sphere-of-Influence.

Program 1.A
Consult and cooperate with surrounding communities and applicable state and federal agencies, in an on-going program to improve and update the database and other information on regional geologic/seismic conditions.

Policy 2
In accordance with State law, development proposals within designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones shall be accompanied by appropriate geotechnical analysis.

Program 2.A
Prepare an informational handout, which specifies the format and contents of geotechnical and fault investigations which must be carried out within Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones.

Program 2.B
Establish a cooperative arrangement with the County Geologist, the State Geologist, or contract State-Certified Geologist and/or geological engineer to review and determine the adequacy of geotechnical and fault hazard studies prepared within the City.

Policy 3
The Garnet Hill Fault shall be regulated as an active Fault Hazard Management Zone.

Policy 4
The City shall require the preparation of fault hazard analyses across the Garnet Hill Fault and shall restrict development in a manner consistent with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and the General Plan Geotechnical Report.

Program 4.A
The City shall establish criteria for geotechnical and fault hazard analysis within the designated Garnet Hill Fault Zone.

Policy 5
Progressively maintain and update the City's program to encourage the rehabilitation of structures, which pose a threat or hazard due to inadequate seismic design, engineering or construction.

Policy 6
Cooperate and coordinate with public and quasi-public agencies to assure seismicity strengthened or relocated facilities, and other appropriate measures to safeguard water, electricity, natural gas and other transmission and distribution systems.

Program 6.A
Encourage and cooperate with CalTrans to stabilize susceptible slopes and strengthen bridges, elevated roadways and other structures along state highways, which may be subject to failure during major seismic events, thereby isolating portions of the community from emergency aid and assistance.

Policy 7
Play an active role in the development and/or distribution of earthquake preparedness information and materials to City residents and local businesses.

Program 7.A
Confer and cooperate with local utility companies, Coachella Valley Water District, Palm Springs Unified School District, police and fire departments, and others to coordinate education of the general public regarding appropriate action before, during and after earthquakes and other disasters.

Policy 8
The City shall require the location of new septic tank leach fields, seepage pits, drainage facilities and heavily irrigated areas, if any, away from foundations and other structural supports to minimize the creation of a localized collapse of soils and associated hazards.

Policy 9
Development in areas identified as being subject to a rockfall or landslide hazard may be required to prepare detailed geotechnical analysis, including site response to seismic events, and require mitigation measures that reduce associated hazards to insignificant levels.

FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Flooding and Hydrology Element sets forth the goals, policies and programs that are intended to address potential drainage and flooding hazards occurring within the community. The primary intent of this element is to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the community from potential flood and associated hazards. It references and coordinates with other elements of the General Plan, which also address threats to the lives and property of the community's residents. The potential and extent of the 100-year and 500-year flooding threat is assessed, the 100-year storm being the highest magnitude storm expected to occur on average every 100 years. It is the intention of the community to plan and implement the phased development of flood control facilities, both project-specific and City-wide. Provisions for open space and multiple uses, wildlife, and pedestrian and equestrian corridors within major drainages are also planned.

BACKGROUND

Elements directly related to Flooding & Hydrology include the Emergency Preparedness Element, which addresses the City's most significant environmental threats. Also related, to a lesser extent, is the Geotechnical Element, which addresses associated liquefaction, erosion threats and water storage facilities. The Hazardous and Toxic Wastes Element is also related by potential of stormwater runoff transporting hazardous and toxic materials stored on the surface and underground. Other related elements include the Land Use Element, which affects essential relationships of use to location-specific threats, and the Circulation Element, which defines the availability of and need for secure access and evacuation routes in the event of a major flooding threat to the community.

Monterey Avenue, Rancho Mirage 1993

State policies and regulations require that the General Plan of counties and cities identify and offer mitigation measures for existing and potential flooding hazards in the area. Specifically, Chapter 73 of the Statutes of California, 1939 mandates the joint planning of area-wide drainage plans affecting local jurisdictions. Mapping areas subject to inundation in the event of dam failures is required pursuant to California Government Code Section 8589.5 and 65302(g). Government Code Section 8401(c) requires that local governments plan, adopt, and enforce land use regulations for flood plain management. Known as the Cobey-Alquist Flood Plain Management Act, this legislation also sets forth requirements for receiving state financial assistance for flood control.

Desert Conditions and Flood Hazards

The City of Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley enjoy a subtropical desert climate. Mean annual rainfall is very low on the desert floor, ranging from 4 to 6 inches per year and averaging about 4.5 inches near the Santa Rosa Mountain foothills. In some years no measurable rainfall has been reported. Summer daytime temperatures can exceed 125°F and winter temperatures occasionally fall below freezing. The surrounding mountain slopes generally receive rainfall that increases with elevation. The mountains are also generally cooler, with an approximate 5°F drop with every 1,000 foot increase in elevation.

Areas of potential flooding are generally associated with the Whitewater River and its tributaries, mountain canyons and their alluvial fans, and runoff associated with the Indio Hills (including Edom Hill) drainage. Most of the rainfall occurs during the cooler months of November through March, but occasional high-intensity thunderstorms and tropical storms occur in late summer and early fall. Although the ground may be generally dry at the beginning of a storm, sufficient amounts and intensities of rainfall can saturate the surface, substantially reducing percolation and increasing runoff. Development also increases runoff by creating large areas of impervious surfaces. Increased runoff upstream can be a significant contributor to downstream damage.

Country Club Drive, Rancho Mirage

Benchmark storms used by the Army Corps of Engineers to calculate the most intense credible storm includes the storm of September 24, 1939. Centered over Indio and consisting of a thunderstorm preceding a major storm off the west coast of Mexico, this intense storm generated 6.45 inches of rain in a period of 6 hours. As further example of the storm runoff potential in the area, the tropical storm Kathleen of September 9-11, 1976 generated very heavy general rainfall over a three county area, with Rancho Mirage receiving three inches. The surrounding hills and mountains received as much as 14 inches, with rainfalls generally increasing with elevation.

Regional Flood Control and the Coachella Valley Water District

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) is responsible for the management of regional drainage within and in the vicinity of Rancho Mirage, including rivers, major streams and their tributaries, and areas of significant sheet flooding. The District is empowered with broad management functions, including flood control planning and construction of drainage improvements for regional flood control facilities, as well as watershed and watercourse protection related to those facilities. To carry out its mandate, the District also has powers of taxation, bonded indebtedness, land and water rights acquisition, and cooperative partnerships with local, state and federal agencies. An elected Board acts as the official decision-making body of the District.

Local Drainage Management

While CVWD has the primary responsibility, in close cooperation and coordination with the City, for managing regional drainage in and around the community, the management of local drainage remains the direct responsibility of the City. The effectiveness with which the City manages drainage issues will have a direct effect on the scale, complexity and cost of future flood control facilities. The cost-effectiveness of prevention and on-site management is actively integrated into community land use planning and regulation, which recognizes significant constraints in many areas of the City.

The preservation of lands constrained by topography or drainage, including steep slopes, areas rich in vegetation and cover, and alluvial plains and drainage channels greatly reduces runoff and preserves the capacity of downstream facilities. Furthermore, the planned integration of on-site stormwater detention facilities, where possible and appropriate, significantly reduces the needed size of downstream facilities, while creating opportunities for groundwater recharge, and enhanced open space and/or recreation areas.

FEMA and the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps

Many of the areas of the United States subject to flooding from 100-year storms have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The resulting documents are the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which serve as the basis for determining the need for and availability of federal flood insurance. Exhibit V-4 is a compilation of the data presented in corresponding FIRM Community Panels dated September 14, 1979, June 2, 1992 and September 30, 1988. The FEMA maps for the City of Rancho Mirage designate the Whitewater River Channel and the East

Magnesia Springs Canyon drainages within the 100-year flood plain (Zone A). Major down-sloping streets in the Magnesia Springs Canyon alluvial fan are also cited as occurring within the 100-year flood plain.

Flooding and inundation are also expected in the Sphere area immediately north of Interstate-10, and is so designated by FEMA. Varying depths and velocities ranging from two feet deep and flows of up to seven feet per second are expected during 100 year flooding. There are also extensive areas designated Zone B on the FEMA maps, these being areas located between the 100 and the 500-year flood or areas subject to 100-year flooding but at depths less than one foot. These occur along portions of the Whitewater River Channel, an undeveloped portion of the Magnesia Springs alluvial fan, and along the lower slopes of Edom Hill (Please see Exhibit V-4). Each of the applicable flood zones are briefly described below.

A: Areas of 100-year flood; base flood elevations have not been determined.

AO: Special Flood Hazard Areas inundated by types of 100-year shallow flooding where depths are between 1.0 and 3.0 feet; depths are shown, or areas of 100-year alluvial fan flooding, depths and velocities shown, but no flood hazard factors are determined.

B: Areas between limits of the 100 year flood and 500 year flood; or certain areas subject to 100 year flooding with average depths less than one (1) foot or where the contributing drainage area is less than one square mile; or areas protected by levees from the base flood.

C: Areas lying outside the boundaries of the 100-year and 500-year flood plains and generally considered safe from flooding.

Major Flood Control Facilities

Capital projects such as dikes, levees, channels, and debris and detention/retention basins have been constructed to manage project-specific, community and regional drainage in the community. Designing, financing and construction of these facilities offers significant challenges as well as opportunities. Approaches to flood control and their costs are weighed against the economic impacts likely to result from major flooding. Flood control improvements are frequently necessitated by development itself, which creates it's own runoff management problems.

The Whitewater River Channel is the main drainage facility in the City and the Coachella Valley. At Rancho Mirage, the Whitewater River drains approximately 720 square miles, and generates a 100-year storm discharge of approximately 37,000 cfs and a standard project discharge of approximately 78,000 cfs. The Coachella Valley Water District is continuing its program of channel revetment or concrete armoring to protect the channel from stormwater erosion.

Areas in the City that have received flood control improvements are those subject to potentially destructive floods with a probable frequency of at least once ever 100 years (100-year flood). Tremendous capital investments in dikes, channels, levees and debris/detention basins have been made in the community where these threats occur, and are listed on the following Table.

Table V-1
Major Drainage Channels

Channel	Yr. Built	Cost (Mil)	Funding
* West Magnesia Falls Channel	1986	$ 4.7	FEMA/RDA
* East Magnesia Falls Channel			CVWD
* Palm Valley Channel			Assessment District
* Sky Mountain Channel System	1982	$ 2.3	"

Channel	Yr. Built	Cost (Mil)	Funding
* Peterson Channel #1	1982	$ 1.6	"
* Thunderbird Channel	1984	$ 2.1	"
* Villas Channel	1984	$ 1.1	"
* Whitewater River Channel			
* Da Vall Drive Storm Drain	1988-89	$ 1.5	RDA
* Palm View Storm Drain	1990-91	$ 7.5	RDA
* Rancho Las Palmas Storm Drain	1990	$0.25	RDA
* Sand Ridge Drainage System			
* Peterson Road Storm Drain #2	1986	$ 0.3	Assessment District
* Magnesia Falls Interim Channel	1985	$ 0.6	RDA
* Bob Hope Storm Drain	1983	$ 0.7	City

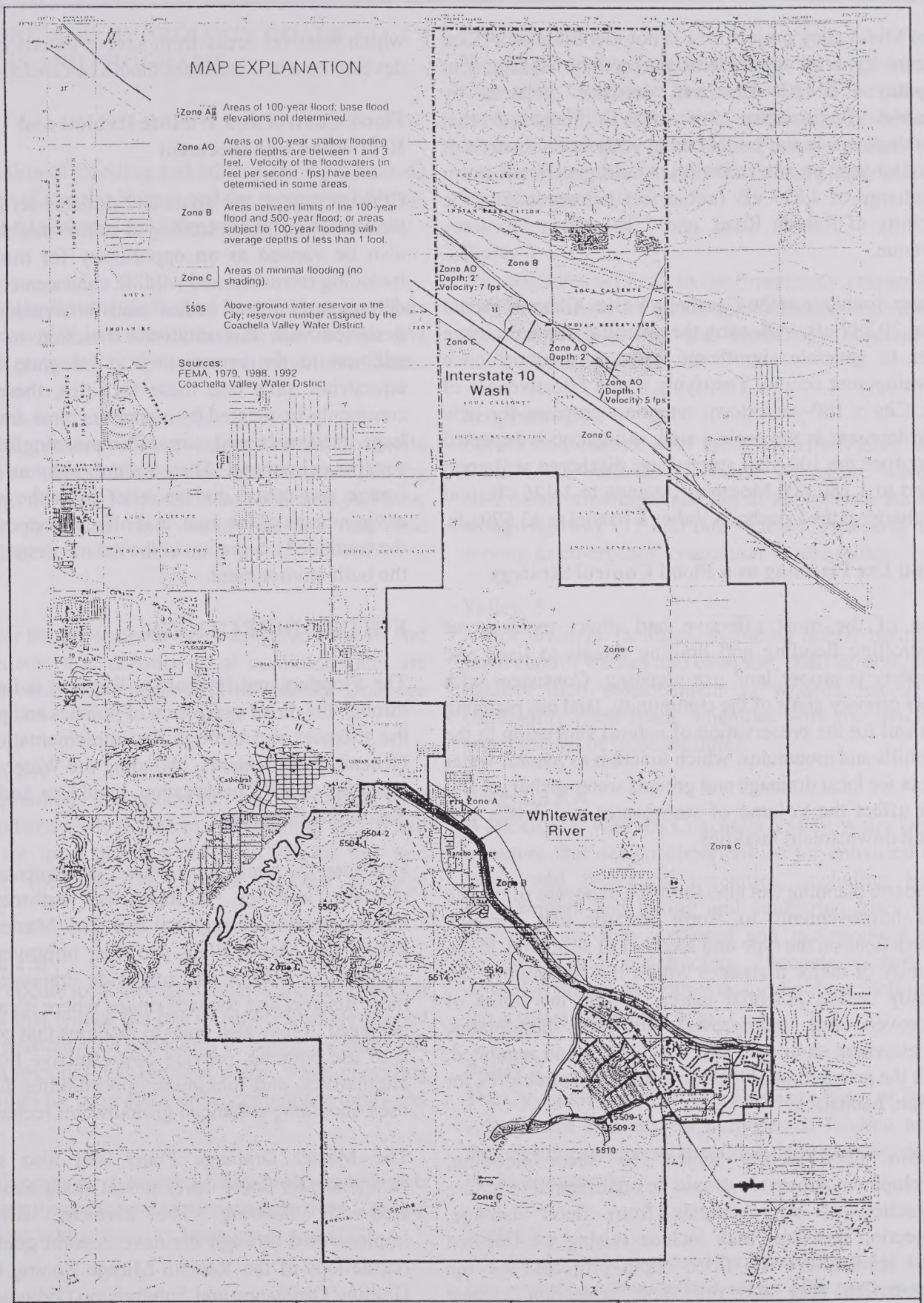
Northside Master Drainage Plan

Areas of the City occurring north of the Whitewater River Channel have suffered distinct flooding problems in the past, and the potential for increased flood-related damage increases as development in the northside area continues. Hydrology analysis indicates a stormwater generation factor of approximately 1.0 cubic foot per second (cfs) runoff per acre during a 10-year storm, and 2.0 cfs per acre in a 100-year storm. The analyses further indicate the need for 10 year and 100 year storm water drainage facilities to adequately and cost-effectively address the storm water and flooding threat in the northside study area. The City has already installed major portions of these improvements in the Tamarisk area, with additional facilities being planned.

Frank Sinatra Drive
Rancho Mirage

Mid-Valley Channel

The Coachella Valley Water District has completed the planning and design of a concrete-lined trapezoidal drainage channel to be constructed along the foot of the northeast facing slope of the Palm Springs Sand Ridge. The channel will have a sandy bottom wherever possible to enhance percolation of runoff. The Mid-Valley Channel would occur adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of the Southern Pacific Railroad lines, which parallel Interstate-10. The channel is planned to extend from Landau Boulevard in Cathedral City to the Coachella Valley Channel in the City of Indio. The Mid-Valley Channel is needed to provide controlled drainage to an isolated portion of the Whitewater drainage system partially defined by the northeast facing slope of the Palm Springs Sand Ridge. Development planned within the tributary drainage area is required to integrate storm water retention facilities.



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RANCHO MIRAGE GENERAL PLAN

Base Map: Rancho Mirage and Cathedral City USGS 7.5' Quad Maps

City Limits
City SOI:
Date: 11/6/95

Flood Zones and Water Reservoirs In the General Plan Area

The Mid-Valley project area is not identified as a flood hazard zone by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). However, analysis prepared by Bechtel Engineering for CVWD indicates that development in the project area, without the benefit of the 100-year on-site retention, would generate a storm discharge of 4,827 cfs (cubic feet per second) in the vicinity of Ramon Road, and 7,201 cfs at Monterey Avenue.

Storm discharge at the Coachella Valley Channel would total 20,837 cfs, indicating the potential of the drainage area to generate significant stormwater runoff once development occurs. Testifying to the effectiveness of the City's 100-year storm retention program for new development in the project area, mitigation is expected to reduce the 100-year stormwater discharge at Ramon Road to 1,280 cfs, Monterey Avenue to 1,426 cfs, and discharge at the Coachella Valley Channel to 12,690 cfs.

Land Use Planning as a Flood Control Strategy

One of the most effective and direct methods of controlling flooding and limiting threats to lives and property is proper land use planning. Consistent with other primary goals of the community, land use planning can call for the preservation of natural vegetation in the foothills and mountains, which function as natural water sheds for local drainage and ground water recharge, and can affect the volume of stormwater and debris that reach downstream facilities.

Land use planning can also limit the exposure of people and improvements to storm hazards and damage. Restrictions on the type and location of structures in the vicinity of major drainages within the community can greatly reduce potential losses. Within the limits of improved and unimproved 100-year floodplains, development should be severely limited and regulated, with the prohibition of the construction of structures for human habitation.

Within flood zones subject to sheet flooding, development approvals should be conditioned to assure protection of improvements from flood damage. Protection measures may include raising the finished floor level above the flood depth projected for the surrounding area and providing protection against scouring. Until such time as flood protection is provided, which removes areas from severe threats of flooding, development in these areas should be carefully regulated.

Flood Control and Wildlife Habitat and Recreation Enhancement

Consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the General Plan, the controlling of stormwater flows should also be viewed as an opportunity for multiple uses, including recreation and wildlife enhancement. Washes, detention/retention basins and channels should be designed with this multi-use function in mind. In addition to the opportunity to integrate hiking and equestrian trails into these facilities, these areas are commonly frequented by numerous birds and small and large mammals and can offer meaningful areas for passive enjoyment. They are important as a source of forage and cover, and as relief from the more urban environments of the area, and offering opportunities for the continued integration of the natural desert habitat into the built environment.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Flooding and Hydrology Element is implemented through the direct expression of policies and programs of the Element and through the implementation of other General Plan Elements, including the Water Resources, Open Space and Conservation, Land Use, and Biological Resources Elements.

However, the principle and direct implementation of this element will be through the enforcement and implementation of regional and City Master Drainage Plans. The Master Plans and their improvements help control and confine the area-wide drainage pattern to more discreet and focused routes where it can be better managed. It may also point to facilities that complement land use patterns, provide cost-effective flood control alternatives, and maximize opportunities for multiple uses, including enhanced groundwater recharge.

The Master Drainage Plans will also set critical parameters for future development along areas subject to area-wide flooding. The Element will also be implemented through the development guidelines and regulations of the Rancho Mirage Zoning Ordinance, Grading Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance.

FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY GOALS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

Identification of flooding and other hydrologic hazards in the City of Rancho Mirage and the protection of lives, property and essential facilities within the community.

Policy 1
Assure that updated and effective Master Drainage Plans are implemented in a timely fashion for the near and long-term protection of the community and its residents.

Program 1.A
Continue to pro-actively participate with the Coachella Valley Water District in the development and updating of Rancho Mirage Regional Master Drainage Plans, providing land use and other relevant data and information.

Policy 2
Provide for the implementation of drainage controls and improvements that enhance local conditions and are consistent with and complement the Master Drainage Plans.

Program 2.A
Local regulations and guidelines shall be established and/or updated to direct the management of runoff and provide for local drainage facilities that tie into and maximize the effective use of regional drainage facilities.

Program 2.B
Adopt or update local drainage policies and development standards that reduce the rate of runoff from developed lands, consistent with capacities of public facilities and local and regional management plans, while providing opportunities for open space enhancement and multi-use.

Policy 3
City shall cooperate in securing FEMA map amendments recognizing the appropriate redesignation of the 100-year flood plains within the City boundaries and SOI.

Program 3.A
Working with the Coachella Valley Water District, the City shall coordinate and cooperate in the filing of appropriate FEMA application materials to incrementally secure amendments to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the City, consistent with existing and proposed improvements.

Policy 4
The mandates set forth in the Emergency Preparedness Element shall, to the extent applicable, be implemented through the Flooding and Hydrology Element and Master Drainage Plans.

Program 4.A
Confer and consult with the Coachella Valley Water District, as well as CalTrans, to assure adequate all-weather crossings/facilities at appropriate locations along Highway 111 and Interstate-10, especially those serving as emergency evacuation/access routes.

Policy 5
Major drainage facilities, including debris basins and flood control washes and channels, shall be designed to balance their enhancement as wildlife habitat and community open space amenities with the functional requirements of these facilities.

Program 5.A
Work closely with the Coachella Valley Water District to assure that design opportunities for enhanced open space and recreation amenities, including habitat enhancement and hiking and equestrian trails where practical, are fully explored and incorporated when designing and constructing channels, debris and detention basins, and other major drainage facilities, to the greatest extent practical.

Policy 6
The City shall establish Area Drainage Plans or Benefit Assessment Districts for purposes of funding needed drainage improvements benefiting defined tributary areas of the community.

Policy 7
All development proposed on lands of one (1) acre or larger shall be required to retain 100 percent of the 100-year storm runoff on-site.

NOISE ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Noise Element is intended to help coordinate the community's various land uses with the existing and future noise environment, and to ensure that any negative effects of noise are minimized or avoided completely. As development continues, the City shall carefully review proposals to ensure that land uses incompatible with the noise environment are avoided. It is the intention of this element to identify current (1996) noise problems within the City and its Sphere-of-Influence and to determine future noise impacts resulting from continued growth. Through the implementation of the policies and programs of this element, any current and future adverse noise impacts can be greatly reduced or avoided entirely, and the general health, safety and welfare of the community can be protected from significant noise impacts.

BACKGROUND

The Noise Element is directly related to the Land Use and Circulation Elements. The location of sensitive land uses, including housing, schools and medical facilities, are also affected by issues addressed in the Noise Element. The element also has a direct relationship to the Economic Development Element, with the City's peaceful and quiet atmosphere a major community asset. Low noise levels are a basic element of the resort residential environment of the community. Generally, the City enjoys a quiet noise environment, with existing community noise being dominated by highway and local traffic, intermittent aircraft fly-overs, and commercial operations and heating/ventilation equipment. In general, however, the residential neighborhoods of the community are quiet, with average noise levels typical of quiet rural areas. Occasional high noise levels from general and commercial aviation have a limited but intrusive impact on the community's noise environment.

The issues addressed in the Noise Element include those set forth in subsection (f) of the California Government Code Section 65302, which requires that the Noise Element identify and analyze noise problems in the community. The implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 21083.1, mandates adherence to the State Guidelines and empowers communities to determine whether or not a proposed project may have a "significant effect on the environment". These significant impacts may range from excessive traffic noise in a residential neighborhood, to industrial manufacturing noise impacting a hospital or convalescent home.

The California Department of Health Services has prepared a Model Community Noise Control Ordinance, which was developed in accordance with Section 46062 of the Health and Safety Code to assist local agencies in the development of model ordinances to control and abate noise. State guidelines require that a community noise control ordinance be adopted, which sets forth control policies and programs that "minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise." The City has adopted such an ordinance (see below).

Concern regarding the potential psychological and physiological impacts of noise has increased significantly in recent years. Excessive noise levels are not only a potential annoyance but can constitute a significant health threat resulting in temporary or permanent hearing loss, and mental distress. The noise environment can also have a profound influence on the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)

Noise is defined as unwanted or undesired sound. Airborne sound is the result of a very rapid change in air pressure from the surrounding "normal" atmospheric pressure. The combination of noise from all sources near and far is the Ambient Noise Level. For purposes of this discussion, the ambient noise level at a given location is termed "environmental noise".

Understanding environmental noise requires some familiarity with the physical description of noise. The important physical characteristics of sound include its frequency range, intensity/loudness and temporal/time-varying aspect. The decibel (dB), A-weighted level, and Community Noise Equivalency Level (CNEL) are all units of measurement used to describe and numerically weight noise.

The decibel is a unit of measurement describing the amplitude or strength of sound. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is the weighted average of the intensity of a sound, with corrections for time of day, and averaged over 24 hours. The time of day corrections require the addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m, and the addition of 10 decibels to sound levels at night between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. These additions are made during these time periods because during the evening and night hours, with the decrease in overall amount and loudness of noise generated, when compared to daytime hours, there is an increased sensitivity to sounds. For this reason sounds seem louder and are weighted accordingly. Essentially, during these evening and night hours the maximum tolerable noise levels should be 5 to 10 dBA lower and the CNEL number is weighted to assure this bias.

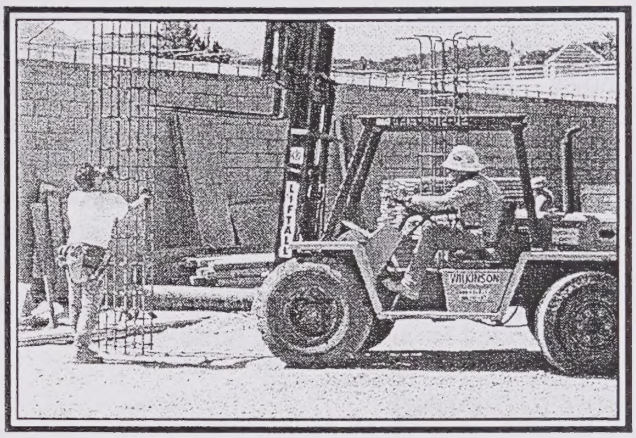
Ranges and Effects of Noise

The most common sounds vary between 40 dB (very quiet) and 100 dB (very loud). Normal conversation at three feet is roughly at 60 dB, while loud engine noises equate to 110 dB, which can cause serious discomfort. Due to the logarithmic nature of the sound measuring (decibel) scale, doubling the sound energy of a noise source only increases the decibel rating by 3 dB. However, due to the internal mechanism of the human ear and how it receives and processes noise, a sound must be nearly 10 dB higher than another sound to be judged twice as loud. Physical health, psychological well-being, social cohesion, property values and economic productivity can all be affected by excessive amounts of noise.

The effects of noise on people can be grouped into three general categories: subjective effects, such as annoyance and nuisance, interference with activities such as conversation and sleep, and physiological effects, for example, a startle or hearing loss. Adverse reactions to noise generally increase with an increase in the difference between background or ambient noise and the noise generated from a particularly intrusive source such as a barking dog, traffic, aircraft or industrial operations. In most situations, noise control measures must reduce noise by 5 to 10 dBA in order to effectively lower the perceived sound. Therefore, loud, short duration noises from barking dogs and low-flying aircraft generally have little impact upon the CNEL levels of an area, due to the averaging techniques utilized to define CNEL.

Existing Community Noise Environment

In the City of Rancho Mirage, the primary source of noise, as in most Coachella Valley communities, is a consequence of motor vehicle traffic. To a lesser but occasionally substantial degree, aircraft traffic also contributes an intrusive element to the noise



environment. The U.S. Interstate-10/Southern Pacific Railroad corridor has a substantial impact on the northern portion of the City and the Sphere-of-Influence. Other sources of community noise include mechanical equipment serving commercial land uses, resorts and major institutions.

Motor Vehicle Noise

The principle noise source measured (1996) within the community is vehicular traffic, including automobiles, trucks, buses, and motorcycles. The level of noise generated by vehicular traffic generally varies according to the volume of traffic, the percentage of trucks, and average traffic speed. The tables below show the impacts of traffic and other sources at several locations in the community on local noise environments. The tables also presents projected impacts expected from General Plan buildout.

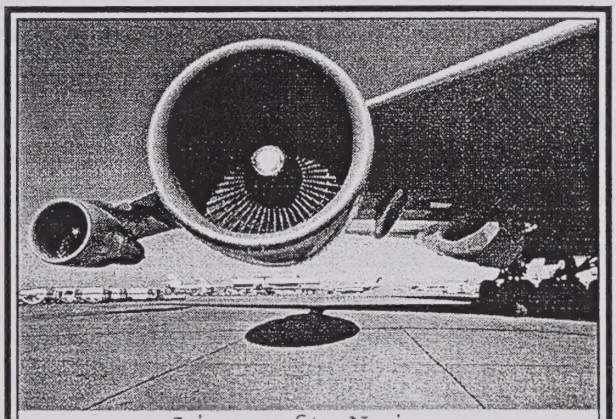
Interstate-10 and Southern Pacific Railroad Lines

In addition to traffic along Highway 111 and the other major arterial roadways impacting the City, both incorporated and sphere areas of the community are also impacted by rail and vehicular traffic associated with the Southern Pacific Railroad line and U.S.

Interstate-10, respectively. While the passage of trains is an intrusive noise event, it occurs only periodically and is limited in duration. The influence of traffic noise of Interstate-10 is more significant and increases at night with persistent truck volumes combined with an atmospheric temperature inversion at night, which tends to reduce the acoustic attenuation typical of distance over open terrain. On a CNEL basis, the calculated combined impacts associated with 1996 Interstate-10 and Southern Pacific RR traffic place the 65 dB and 70 dB contours at 277 feet and 117 feet south of the railroad lines, respectively.

Aircraft Noise

Aircraft noises impacting the community emanate from commercial and general aviation operations at the Palm Springs Regional Airport, located northwest and frequently directly upwind of the City. The recently updated Airport Master Plan and Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study evaluated airport operations, monitored portions of the noise environment, and projected future noise impacts from planned expansions and increased operations. Flight tracks or patterns aircraft are assumed to follow in the noise study indicate limited overflights in Rancho Mirage.



Aircraft Noise

This contrasts with anecdotal information regarding overflights in the City generally paralleling the Whitewater River. The computed 1993 CNEL noise contours associated with the Regional Airport place the 60 CNEL contour west of Date Palm Drive. Aircraft noise can reach high levels but for relatively short periods and the effect can be characterized as significantly intrusive. While improvements in noise abatement in the design of aircraft engines is expected to reduce the noise level of individual aircraft, continued growth in the number of passengers and operations will increase the frequency of exposure.

Noise monitoring in the City indicates that individual aircraft overflight noise levels substantially exceed 70 dBA. Despite current and anticipated enhancements in aircraft technology and operations management programs, high overflight noise levels of short duration can be expected to occur at frequencies dependent upon weather conditions and wind direction. The City should take a pro-active role in encouraging the adherence of operations to professed and assumed flight patterns at the Regional Airport, which will substantially reduce the impacts now occurring in the City.

Mechanical and Industrial Noise

In addition to noise generated by vehicular traffic and aircraft, there are other noise generators within the City, which could create significant noise related conflicts. Industrial operations related to such activities as rock crushing, construction and automotive repair can create substantial noise problems. Loading and materials transfer areas, outdoor materials warehousing operations and other acoustically unscreened operations will also raise issues of impact and compatibility. Rail transfers operations can also be expected to be potentially significant intermittent noise generators.

Another important source of potentially significant noise is from the operation of mechanical equipment, including chillers, refrigerator units and heating/air conditioner equipment associated with commercial centers. Noise from roof-mounted equipment is especially effective at penetrating into adjoining neighborhoods and impacting sensitive receptors. The constant hum associated with fans and compressors can substantially impact the enjoyment of the outdoors and adversely affect the quality of life. Substantial progress has been made in noise analysis and mitigation through careful equipment design and ever improving baffling and noise cancellation technologies.

Noise and Land Use Compatibility

In California and the City specifically, a CNEL of 65 dBA is used as a standard for maximum outdoor noise levels in residential areas. Typically, the noise impacts cited are "unmitigated" or represent unobstructed transmission paths representing the worst case noise

impact. As discussed below, a variety of design and technical fixes are available to substantially reduce noise impacts. The compatibility of different land uses is directly related to the user's sensitivity to noise and the potential for impacts to be mitigated.

Particularly sensitive land uses include residences, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals and nursing homes, and destination resort areas. In addition, parks, golf courses and other outdoor activity areas can be sensitive to noise disturbances. Less sensitive land uses include commercial and industrial uses, conventional hotels and motels, playgrounds and neighborhood ball parks, and other outdoor spectator sport arenas. Least sensitive to noise are heavy commercial and industrial uses, transportation, communication and utility land uses. Table V-2 illustrates the ranges of allowable exterior noise levels for various land uses.

TABLE V-2
COMMUNITY NOISE AND LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

Land Uses	CNEL (dBA)						
	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential Land Uses: Single and Multi-Family Dwellings, Group Quarters, Mobile Homes	A	B		C		D	
Transient Lodging: Hotels and Motels		A	B		C	D	
School Classrooms, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Convalescent Hospitals		A	B		C	D	
Recreation Land Uses: Golf Courses, Open Space (with walking, bicycling or horseback riding trails, etc.)	A	B		C		D	
Office Building, Personal Business, and Professional Services		A	B		C	D	
Commercial Land Uses: Retail Trade, Movie Theaters, Restaurants, Bars, Entertainment Activities, Services		A	B		C	D	
Heavy Commercial/Industrial: Wholesale, Manufacturing, Utilities, Transportation, Communications			A		C	D	
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphi-theaters, Music Shells (may be sensitive receptors or generators)		B				D	
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports		B				D	

Source: Federal Highway Program Manual Vol. 7, Ch. 7, Sec. 3, 1982

Explanatory Notes

A **Normally Acceptable**: With no special noise reduction requirements assuming standard construction.

B **Conditionally Acceptable**: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirement is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design

C **Generally Unacceptable**: New construction is discouraged. If new construction does not proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

D **Land Use Discouraged**: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Rancho Mirage Noise Ordinance

In 1995, the City adopted an amendment to the Municipal Health and Safety Code to establish noise standards throughout the community. Section 8.45 of the Municipal Code cites the value and importance given by residents, visitors and businesses to the exceptional quality of life and peace and quiet of our community. The Rancho Mirage Noise Ordinance provides definitions of key terms and defines exterior noise level standards on a time-of-day basis along with adjustments for intensity and duration. It also provides regulations for noise measurement/monitoring and cites special provisions of and exceptions to the ordinance. Violations of the Noise Ordinance are defined as a nuisance and subject to the procedures, remedies and penalties set forth in the City's Nuisance Abatement Ordinance. The City Noise Ordinance is intended to regulate excessive noise from existing uses and their activities. The noise standards in the General Plan are intended to guide the location of future noise generators and sensitive land uses.

Noise Measurements and Computer Modeling: Existing and Projected Future Noise Levels

In order to understand and evaluate the impacts of land use patterns, traffic and individual developments on the noise environment, a variety of data has been collected, sites have been monitored and existing and future impacts have been modeled. Existing conditions have been specifically monitored and assessed at various areas of special focus or concern, including in the vicinity of schools, residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and along major arterial roadways. The tables below show existing and projected General Plan buildout conditions at specific locations and along major roadway segments.

Most transportation noise is highly predictable if specific data concerning operating characteristics are available. Computer models and simulations are used to compute the noise environment along transportation routes based upon the vehicles operating characteristics and the number of vehicles utilizing that particular transportation route. These predictions, provided by existing quantitative models, have been verified by sound measurements at strategic and sensitive receptor locations in the City of Rancho Mirage. The Noise Monitoring section identifies the noise monitor site locations.

Future noise impacts to the community are expected to be primarily generated by increasing traffic volumes. From the Circulation Element, we can extract the future volumes projected on major roadways. In order to make the projected traffic noise data more accurate, the average posted speed limits and a percentage mix of light and heavy truck traffic along the roadways are included in the modeling data. This information was supplied through City and CVAG traffic counts, counts prepared for intersection improvement analyses, and for General Plan traffic modeling. Computer modeling was used to estimate noise impacts due to the increased traffic volumes.

It is important to note that special attention to project-specific site design may substantially reduce noise impacts below those projected, and therefore, these estimates are considered to be conservative and unmitigated. A wide range of design criteria affecting roadway engineering and traffic noise abatement include differences in final grade between the roadbed and the top of walls, spacing of intersections, parkway widths and other considerations. Table V-4 lists the 1996 and projected General Plan buildout noise contours along the City's major roadways.

General Plan Monitoring Sites

Measurements were taken at nine selected locations, primarily to address principle land use compatibility questions associated with the updating of the General Plan. Sites included major transportation corridors, land use transition areas, sensitive receptors and residential neighborhoods. Monitoring was conducted during the day and nighttime hours, during the end of February and beginning of March, 1996. Each measurement covered fifteen minutes and was comprised of 900 individual samples. Each of the sites monitored is briefly described below.

1.) **U.S. Interstate-10/Southern Pacific Railroad Corridor**: Monitoring was conducted in the immediate vicinity and south of the railroad lines at about the mid-portion of the north section line of Section 14 in the City's SOI. Impacts from this corridor will affect the appropriateness of various land uses in this area.

2.) **Bob Hope Drive Corridor:** Monitoring was conducted along the east side of Bob Hope Drive, approximately 660 feet north of Gerald Ford Drive. Efficient traffic flows are anticipated and a range of adjoining land use options appear available with the application of thoughtful design and appropriate noise buffering.

3.) **Monterey Avenue Corridor:** This monitoring was conducted immediately west of Monterey Avenue and midway between Frank Sinatra Drive and Country Club Drive. Noise impacts to residential lands located along this important high volume roadway, and the viability of effective mitigation, are an important focus.

4.) **Country Club Dr. & Monterey Ave. Intersection:** Monitoring was conducted at the southwest corner of this intersection allowing a measure of noise from all ranges of vehicle operations. Data from through-traffic and that associated with local shopping center visits also provides important information for land use planning.

5.) **San Jacinto Drive West of Whitewater Park:** Monitoring was conducted on the east side of the road and immediately northwest of Whitewater park. Results provide important information on the viability of this area for residential uses. Highway 111 traffic comprised the primary noise source.

6.) **Sahara Road East of Mirage Drive:** Monitoring was done in the vicinity of Indian Trail Road, on the north side of Sahara Road. This area is of concern in that it represents a transition zone between commercial along Highway 111 and residential uses south of Sahara Road. Important information was collected on the effectiveness of intervening buildings in buffering the residential neighborhood.

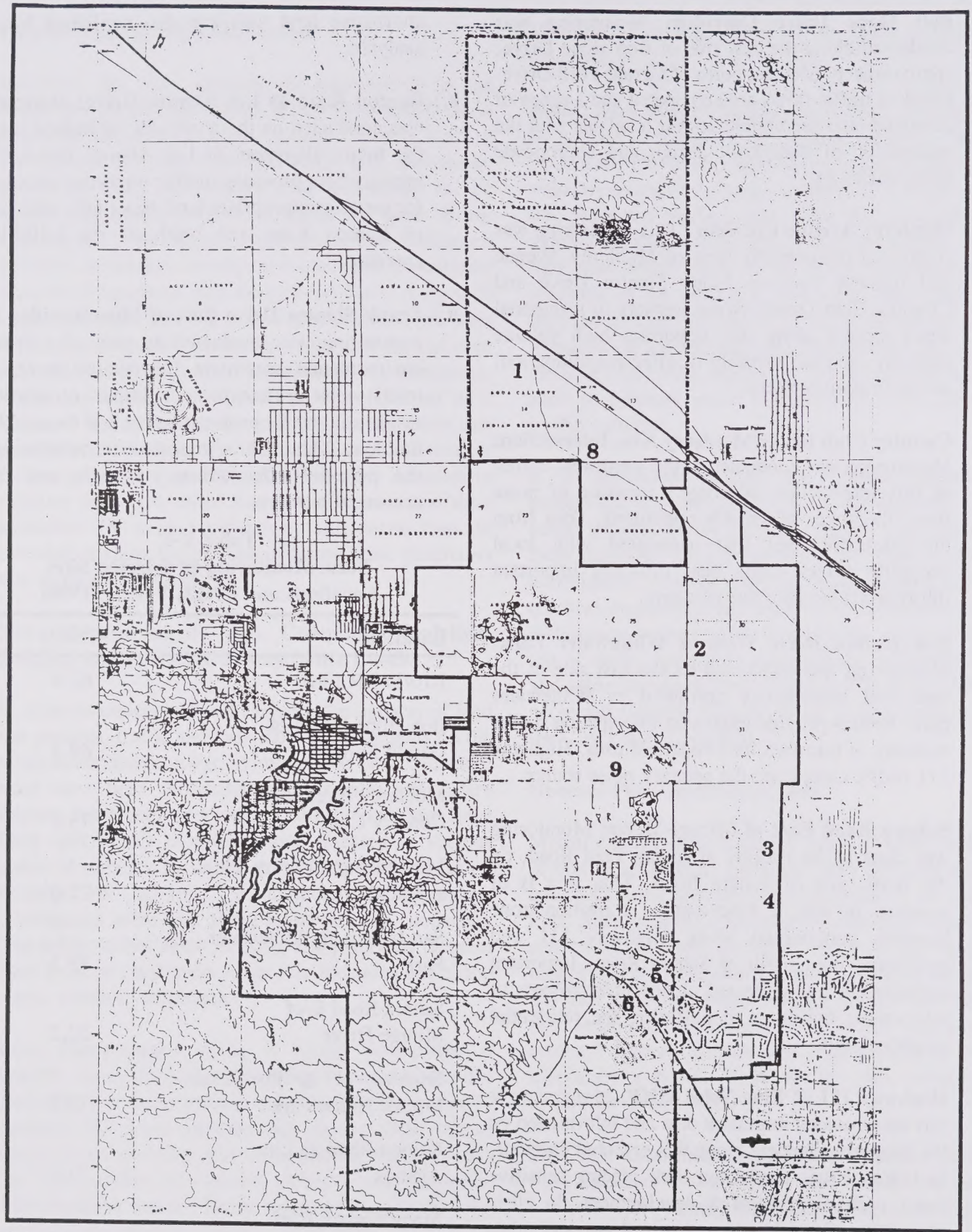
7.) **Highway 111 @ Blue Skies MHP:** Monitoring at this site provided important data and information on the noise environment along this essential corridor, including issues associated with placing sensitive uses, such as residential development, in close proximity. Consideration of mixed use and other alternative land uses are also facilitated by this analysis.

8.) **Ramon Road @ Los Alamos Drive:** Monitoring was conducted on the north side of Ramon east of the future alignment of Los Alamos Drive. This measurement provides another important parameter for gauging appropriate land uses in the area north of Ramon Road and south of the I-10/SPRR corridor.

9.) **Frank Sinatra Drive East of Morningside:** This monitoring was conducted as part of a broader environmental assessment. It evaluated the existing traffic noise environment, its impact on adjoining residences and the projected impacts at General Plan buildout. This data is important in demonstrating the potential effectiveness of walls and other acoustical barriers.

Table V-3
Noise Monitoring @ Selected Sites
Locations and CNEL Values (1996)

Location	CNEL
I-10/SPRR Lines	62.4
Bob Hope Dr. N/of Gerald Ford	69.3
Monterey Ave. N/of Country Club	73.5
Monterey @ Country Club at SW Corner	72.0
San Jacinto @ Whitewater Park	53.3
Sahara Road E/of Mirage Drive	52.2
Highway 111 @ Blue Skies Mobile Home Park	70.8
Ramon Road @ Los Alamos	71.6
Frank Sinatra E/of Morningside	68.5



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City of Rancho Mirage
Noise Monitoring
Sites

Exhibit
V-5

TABLE V-4
1996 AND GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT
PROJECTED NOISE CONTOURS ON MAJOR ROADWAYS
(DISTANCE TO CNEL CONTOURS IN FEET FROM CENTERLINE)

	1996 TRAFFIC				GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT			
ROADWAY SEGMENT	60	65	70	75	60	65	70	75
Interstate-10								
Ramon to Monterey	2186	1359	755	370	3094	2007	1220	663
Highway 111								
North of Frank Sinatra	865	425	183	80	1099	584	259	113
Frank Sinatra to Country Club	855	420	181	80	1065	551	246	106
Country Club to San Jacinto	835	418	178	73	983	510	229	97
San Jacinto to Bob Hope	828	401	172	73	962	500	218	93
South of Bob Hope	810	393	169	70	1081	575	256	109
Monterey Avenue								
Dinah Shore to Gerald Ford	614	282	118	51	881	446	190	82
Gerald Ford to Frank Sinatra	531	239	98	43	962	500	218	93
Frank Sinatra to Country Club	544	244	100	45	847	417	179	79
Country Club to Clancy Lane	673	319	131	56	764	360	151	64
Bob Hope Drive								
Ramon to Dinah Shore	521	223	91	33	780	368	154	66
South of Dinah Shore	521	231	91	34	830	409	176	78
North of Gerald Ford	521	231	91	34	763	377	159	71
Gerald Ford to Frank Sinatra	606	268	108	41	777	378	158	67
Frank Sinatra to Country Club	623	287	119	51	667	317	130	55
Country Club to Clancy Lane	579	259	109	47	765	361	152	65
Clancy Lane to Highway 111	445	189	79	--	730	345	146	62
Da Vall Drive								
North of Ramon	N/A	--	--	--	736	358	150	62
Ramon to Dinah Shore	N/A	--	--	--	776	377	157	66
Dinah Shore to Gerald Ford	N/A	--	--	--	776	377	157	66
Gerald Ford to Frank Sinatra	273	114	49	--	843	421	180	73
Plumley Road								
Dinah Shore to Gerald Ford	202	79	29	--	426	183	72	26
Ramon Road								
West of Da Vall	564	250	101	37	937	474	203	89
DaVall to Los Alamos	564	250	101	37	969	504	221	96
Los Alamos to Bob Hope	564	250	97	37	913	463	204	88
Dinah Shore Drive								
West of Plumley	233	91	34	--	838	406	174	74
Plumley to DaVall	233	91	34	--	764	360	151	64
DaVall to Los Alamos	279	113	43	--	813	394	169	70
Los Alamos to Bob Hope	322	129	50	--	843	421	180	73
East of Bob Hope	293	118	46	--	838	406	174	74
West of Monterey	377	157	60	22	838	406	174	74

Continues on Next Page

TABLE V-4 (cont'd)
1996 AND GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT
PROJECTED NOISE CONTOURS ON MAJOR ROADWAYS
(DISTANCE TO CNEL CONTOURS IN FEET FROM CENTERLINE)

	1996 TRAFFIC				GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT			
ROADWAY SEGMENT	60	65	70	75	60	65	70	75
Gerald Ford Drive								
West of Plumley	358	150	64	--	779	367	158	67
Plumley to Da Vall	462	203	83	--	838	406	174	74
DaVall to Los Alamos	315	134	56	--	823	402	172	71
East of Los Alamos	358	150	64	--	779	367	158	67
West of Bob Hope	358	150	64	--	843	421	180	73
East of Bob Hope	N/A	--	--	--	666	316	129	56
West of Monterey	N/A	--	--	--	803	390	162	68
Frank Sinatra Drive								
DaVall to Morningside	374	156	66	--	813	394	169	70
Morningside to Bob Hope	372	161	67	--	736	358	150	62
East of Bob Hope	434	185	77	--	736	358	150	62
West of Monterey	428	182	77	--	828	402	172	71
Country Club Drive								
Highway 111 to Morningside	298	123	53	--	646	296	125	52
Morningside to Bob Hope	363	157	66	--	713	337	142	60
Bob Hope to Monterey	573	256	104	46	729	344	145	62

Managing the Noise Environment

There are a variety of strategies available for managing the City's noise environment and preserving those qualities of peace and quiet that are essential and highly valued community assets. Land use planning, transportation planning, project design mitigation, simple and sophisticated technical fixes, and acoustical barriers are applied to community noise compatibility issues and should be approached in this order.

In areas subject to significant or potentially significant noise impacts, site planning and design standards are geared to provide direct and integrated noise impact mitigation. Applied mitigation measures include the use of buffer zones consisting of earthen berms, walls and landscaping between sensitive land uses and roadways and other noise sources. In addition, site planning and building orientation can provide shielding of outdoor living spaces, and orient operable windows away from roadways. Effective acoustical materials can also be incorporated into building windows and walls which adequately reduce outdoor noise.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Generally, the City of Rancho Mirage enjoys a quiet noise environment consistent with its character as a resort residential community. The City is, however, most notably impacted by highway and major roadway noise sources. Future efforts in this regard should focus on the preservation of the peaceful and quiet atmosphere, which residents and visitors to the community now enjoy.

Existing and future noise abatement and mitigation will have varying levels of effectiveness, depending upon the noise type and its source, site conditions, geography and land uses. Noise issues have been carefully considered in the development of the Land Use Element and land use distributions. Zoning designations provide another level of land use control, which assures appropriate uses near significant noise sources, and development standards and guidelines that will reduce impacts and enhance compatibility. The Circulation Element has also been designed, where possible, to protect the City's residential areas from excessive traffic noise and to assure compatible noise levels.

NOISE ELEMENT
GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

A noise environment providing peace and quiet that complements and is consistent with the City's resort residential character and the various mix of land uses comprising the community.

Policy 1
The potential of land use patterns, associated traffic and its distribution, and individual development shall be assessed for their potential to generate adverse and incompatible noise impacts, and significant impacts identified shall be appropriately mitigated.

Program 1.A
Expand the City's Noise Ordinance to include noise exposure thresholds triggering project-specific noise impact studies. Provide development standards and project design guidelines, which include a variety of mitigation measures which can be applied to meet City standards.

Program 1.B
Provide an outline of minimal requirements for noise studies for future development projects. Studies shall analyze project impacts and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures.

Policy 2
Protect noise sensitive land uses, including residences, resorts and community open space, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals and convalescent homes from high noise levels from both existing and future noise sources.

Program 2.A
Establish and periodically update an inventory of existing significant noise sources and incompatibility areas, and develop procedures to reduce the noise effects on these areas, where economically and aesthetically feasible.

Program 2.B
On a project-specific basis, require the installation of soundwalls, earthen berms, wall and window noise insulation and/or other mitigation measures in areas exceeding the City's noise limit standards.

Program 2.C
Verify projected noise levels through noise monitoring at locations adjacent to residential and other noise sensitive areas where traffic volumes have increased by more than 30%.

Program 2.D
Develop a parkway master plan for Monterey Avenue, between Frank Sinatra and Country Club Drives, which utilizes differences in elevation, increased parkway width, mounding and/or berming, acoustically effective walls and cohesive landscape planning to address noise compatibility, and other goals and policies. Facilitate the establishment of appropriate financing mechanism for project design and development.

Policy 3
Project designs shall be required to include measures which assure that interior noise levels for residential development do not exceed 45 CNEL, as required by Title 25 (California Noise Insulation Standards).

Program 3.A
In areas subject to potentially significant noise impacts, the City shall require new development, upon construction, to demonstrate compliance with all applicable noise level limits at project completion.

Policy 4
Land uses that are compatible with higher noise levels shall make a conscious effort to locate adjacent to the City's major arterial roads and highways, the Southern Pacific Railroad/Interstate-10 corridor, or designated industrial lands in order to maximize noise related land use compatibility.

Program 4.A
Periodically review land use patterns and the community noise environment, and amend the Land Use map as appropriate to assure reasonable land use/noise compatibility.

Policy 5
Develop and maintain a circulation plan that is consistent with the resort residential character of the City, avoids impacts to existing and planned sensitive receptors/uses, and which provides fixed routes for existing and future truck traffic.

Program 5.A
Encourage a Citywide circulation pattern which places primary traffic loads on major arterials and preserves local neighborhood noise environments by limiting roadways to local traffic to the greatest extent practical.

Program 5.B
Designate primary truck routes and clearly mark these routes through the City. Other than vehicles providing local service, construction traffic and delivery truck through-traffic shall be limited to Highway 111, Monterey Avenue, Ramon Road and Interstate-10.

HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element identifies existing hazardous and toxic material locations in the community, and describes the regulatory environment established to safely manage these materials. The intention of the Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element is to reinforce the City's concern and planning for the protection of all Rancho Mirage residents and visitors from adverse health and other impacts due to the presence of hazardous and toxic materials. The Element sets forth goals, policies and programs that will help assure an effective response to the use, storage, or transport of hazardous and toxic materials in the City of Rancho Mirage and help ensure the general health, safety and welfare of the community from possible impacts associated with these materials.

BACKGROUND

The Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element is directly related to the Air Quality and Water Resources Elements, as policies implemented for hazardous and toxic waste management will have an effect on preservation of clean air and protection against water resource contamination. It is also related to the Land Use Element and land uses, with the potential of hazardous or toxic materials and their storage or disposal undermining land use compatibility. The Emergency Preparedness Element has a direct relationship to the emergency management of these materials and their potential adverse impacts on the community as a result of spillage or upset. Resources addressed by the Biological Resources Element may also be affected by the improper management of these materials, especially herbicides and pesticides. The Fire and Police Protection Element also has a relationship to this element.

California Government Code Section 65302(g) mandates that the General Plan of a community address safety issues, including but not limited to hazardous materials. Modern industrial society has generated a wealth of materials and technologies that have improved our quality of life but have also introduced new and potentially hazardous materials, which must be carefully managed. This element discusses various issues associated with these hazardous and toxic materials and provides background information on how these materials are to be managed and disposed of. Most hazardous materials problems in the area are associated with leaking fuel storage tanks, emissions from industrial and commercial solvents and coatings, pesticide and herbicide use, and chemical and nuclear wastes generated by medical facilities. Control and regulation of hazardous and toxic materials rests largely with county, state and federal agencies.

In the City of Rancho Mirage, there are only a few identified hazardous/toxic material generators associated with commercial, and quasi-industrial and medical operations, which have the potential to be associated with accidental spills, purposeful illegal dumping, air emission, and other uncontrolled discharges into the environment. The improper use and management of these materials by service stations, petroleum product and equipment suppliers, pesticide vendors and users, automotive dealers, medical practitioners and hospitals and clinics pose a significant potential threat to the community and its environment.

A wide variety of products, chemical and purified chemical compounds, and elements that are considered hazardous or toxic are used in households, commercial businesses and industrial operations and processes. They range through home and pool related chlorine products, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, stored fuels and waste oil, chemical solvents and lubricants, and a variety of medical materials, including those associated with chemotherapy and nuclear medicine. All are considered "small quantity generators" and some of those identified in the City include the Eisenhower Medical Center, Desert Orthopedic Center and Pavillions supermarket.

Eisenhower Medical Center

Eisenhower Medical Center (EMC) is a "small quantity generator" of hazardous medical wastes associated with various procedures and treatments provided at the facility. Management and disposal of these materials is

primarily the responsibility of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with additional regulatory responsibility given to the California Office of Health Planning and Development and the Riverside County Department of Health. EMC has developed and implemented both a Medical Waste Management Plan and a Hazardous Materials Management Program, which set forth policies, programs and procedures for handling, storage, use and disposal of these materials. Wastes are stored in controlled conditions on-site and removed every 90 days, with storage typically limited to less than 100 gallons each 90 days.

Community Hazardous Wastes Risks

Currently, there are several potential hazardous waste sites that are generally restricted to the above- mentioned and regulated "small quantity generators". In addition to Eisenhower Medical Center, Desert Orthopedic Center and Pavilions, there are other sites that have been or should be monitored. These include other waste-generating medical clinics and facilities, gasoline service stations, equipment and fuel storage yards, and waste haulers.

Known or identified underground fuel storage occurring at locations in the City, where leakage would pose the most significant hazard, include the GTE Rancho Mirage Exchange, The Springs, the Annenberg Estate and Desert Island. The U.S. EPA requires all service stations to retrofit or replace underground storage tanks with double-walled construction. Several sites in the City have already complied with this rule. In the City Sphere-of-Influence various industrial activities, including sand and gravel operations and automobile dismantling, also have the potential for uncontrolled discharge of hazardous materials.

Hazardous Waste and Sewage Disposal

One area of recent concern in the Coachella Valley and the Rancho Mirage area has been the impact of long-term septic tank use on groundwater resources. Contamination problems have been particularly evident at the lower portion of alluvial cones with extensive upslope residential development. The use of septic tanks in these generally porous soils and on sloping gradients has resulted in concentrated flows of effluent to the lower portions of these areas and has resulted in contamination of the water table. Septic tanks are still widely in use in Rancho Mirage and their use will continue to pose varying threats to ground water.

Sphere-Area Sanitary Landfill

A sanitary landfill (equivalent Class III) was operated on a 57± acre site located in the southwest quarter of Section 11 in the City SOI, south of the Southern Pacific Railroad lines (see City Limits/SOI map). This landfill was operated by the Cathedral City Sanitary District between 1955 and 1967 using the then-standard "burn and bury" technique. From 1983 to the end of 1988, the easterly 40 acres of the site was used as a domestic sewage disposal field. Over approximately six years, the operator, Desert Sewer Pumpers Association, discharged at the site an average of 30,000 gallons per day of domestic pumping of septic tanks, seepage pits, cesspools, service station holding tanks, restaurant grease pits and chemical toilets.

Preliminary subsurface soils tests and investigations were conducted on and near the site in October, 1987. Of primary concern was the potential generation of methane gas, which was measured on the disposal site at 2.1 ppm, below the threshold of concern. The local office of the California Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has been monitoring and administering this site for several years and has required the performance of a Solid Waste Assessment Test (SWAT), which includes groundwater monitoring, hydrogeological assessments, and a chemical characterization of soils and groundwater underlying the site. Recent monitoring has determined significant soils contamination and the RWQCB has requested that the owner release all monitoring and testing technical reports. The extent of site contamination is as yet unclear.

Hazardous Waste Management Plans

The City of Rancho Mirage has the opportunity to coordinate with appropriate county, state and federal agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites, and the active regulation of their timely cleanup. Management strategies may include establishing and maintaining information on these sites, periodic monitoring facilities and operations that produce, utilize or store hazardous materials in the City. Involvement in multi-agency monitoring of illegal dumping in the City, conferring in the regulation of underground storage tanks and septic systems, and regulating the transport of

hazardous materials through the community is also appropriate.

AB 2948 (Chapter 1504, Statutes of 1986), commonly known as the Tanner Bill, authorizes counties to prepare Hazardous Waste Management Plans (HWMP) in response to the need for safe management of hazardous materials and waste products. The Riverside County HWMP was adopted by the Board of Supervisors and approved by the California Department of Health Services in 1990. The County HWMP identifies the types and amounts of wastes generated in the County and establishes programs for managing these wastes.

In order to comply with Health and Safety Code Section 25135, the Riverside County HWMP assures that adequate treatment and disposal capacity is available to manage the hazardous wastes generated within the jurisdiction, and addresses issues related to manufacture and use. This plan was developed jointly by the County, Rancho Mirage and other cities within the County, the State, the public and industry to address the disposal, handling, processing, storage and treatment of local hazardous materials and waste products.

Preparation of the HWMP included extensive public participation. Its policies call for the coordination of County efforts with state and federal agencies in the identification and establishment of programs for managing these wastes. As an integral part of the County HWMP, the City of Rancho Mirage hazardous waste management policies for the General Plan is essentially extensions of the County Plan and are hereby incorporated by reference. Currently (1996), there are several sources of information concerning hazardous waste sites in the City of Rancho Mirage.

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB), as well as the Coachella Valley Water District, maintain information concerning contaminated wells and groundwater. The state and federal Environmental Protection Agencies
(EPA), and the State Department of Health also supply information concerning specific hazardous waste sites and their locations. Private database screening and documentation services are also available, which will search, extract, and summarize reports on contaminated sites recorded in various state and federal databases.

Hazardous Materials Response

Hazardous and toxic materials are determined critical by the County Department of Health, and the County and the City can require property owners to test, temporarily close and/or remove all hazardous liquids, solids or sludge located on the site. Leaking underground storage tanks must be removed by contractors having Hazardous Waste Certification and a General Engineering license. Between cessation of storage and actual closure, monitoring is generally required by the site's operating permit. When soils contamination is detected, the clean up procedure to be followed, the degree or level of cleanliness required by the regulator, and the method of treatment (if permitted) will be directed by the County Health Hazardous Materials Division and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City of Rancho Mirage has the responsibility to coordinate with the appropriate agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites, and the active regulation of their timely cleanup. This element can most efficiently be implemented through regular consultation with the RWQCB and the County Health Department and by updating information on hazardous material sites, monitoring facilities that utilize or produce hazardous materials within the City. The City should also remain current regarding the monitoring and regulating of underground storage tanks and septic systems, and regulating the transport of hazardous materials through the community.

A carefully coordinated program of oversight and management between responsible agencies will be essential. Regular consultation and coordination between the City Emergency Preparedness Director and responsible county and state agencies is also appropriate. Processes for determining appropriate levels of local, County and State personnel and facilities will also be critical. The goal, policies and programs of this element help to direct the planning and development of appropriate strategies to address hazardous and toxic materials in the community.

HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL

The assured safety of City of Rancho Mirage residents and visitors through the regulation of the manufacture, transport, use and disposal of toxic and hazardous materials.

Policy 1
Compile and maintain an inventory of all hazardous waste sites, and regulate, to the extent empowered, the delivery, use and storage of hazardous materials within the City limits and General Plan study area.

Program 1.A
Confer with the appropriate responsible agencies to determine the need for, and the appropriateness of, developing a permitting process for the establishment of facilities which manufacture, store, use or dispose of hazardous and toxic materials within the community or adjacent areas.

Policy 2
Pro-actively encourage and facilitate the safe and immediate cleanup of all existing and future hazardous waste sites within the City of Rancho Mirage and General Plan study area.

Program 2.A
Coordinate with the appropriate state and federal agencies to activate procedures for the cleanup of existing and future hazardous and toxic waste sites within the Rancho Mirage limits and its SOI.

Policy 3
Require and facilitate the safe and responsible disposal of all hazardous and/or toxic wastes in compliance with existing federal, state and county regulations.

Program 3.A
Whenever possible, encourage the development and/or use of innovative and safe chemical compounds, technologies and facilities.

Policy 3.B
Prepare and/or disseminate information and instructive education program materials for residents, including direction on the identification and proper management of household hazardous waste.

Program 3.C
To the extent empowered, prohibit the disposal of automotive and household hazardous and toxic materials in landfills.

Program 3.D
Coordinate with Waste Management of the Desert and other appropriate public and quasi-public agencies to sponsor and develop drop-off locations for hazardous or toxic household products for all Rancho Mirage residents.

Policy 4
Coordinate with the Fire and Police Departments to develop a system for roadway management and for alerting emergency and medical facilities to the impending transport of hazardous and toxic materials.

Program 4.A
Coordinate with appropriate departments and agencies to establish transportation management and contingency emergency procedures and training programs for police, fire, medical and other organizations that would be involved in an airborne release or ground spill of hazardous and toxic materials or waste.

Policy 5
Confer, cooperate and coordinate with the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Coachella Valley Water District to monitor and regulate the use and phased removal of subsurface sewage disposal systems.

Program 5.A
Through the subdivision and/or development review process, the City shall encourage and/or require, to the greatest extent practical, the connection of new development to the sewage collection system of the Coachella Valley Water District.

Program 5.B
Cooperate to help assure that all sewage disposal systems, upon completion of their use, are properly removed from service in accordance with the requirements of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and other regulating agencies.

Policy 6
Identify the location and monitor the use of all underground fuel storage tanks located within the City limits with the potential to release hazardous or toxic materials into the environment.

Program 6.A
Coordinate with appropriate agencies in the enforcement of state and federal regulations for the testing, monitoring and remediation of underground fuel storage tanks for leakage.

Policy 7
Actively oppose any plan or attempt to establish hazardous and toxic waste dumps/landfills or hazardous industrial processes with the potential to adversely affect the community or the City's SOI.

Program 7.A
Coordinate with CVAG and its member cities to actively organize against and oppose any county, state, federal or private effort to build and/or operate hazardous or toxic waste dumps/landfills or to operate hazardous industrial processes, which cannot be mitigated and have the potential to adversely affect the City or its SOI.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER VI

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

This chapter of the General Plan addresses the public services and facilities needed to support development in the City of Rancho Mirage. General Plan elements found in this chapter that discuss these services and facilities include Water, Sewer and Utilities, Fire and Police Protection, Schools and Libraries, Health Services, Emergency Preparedness, Public Building and Facilities, and Arts and Culture. The levels of service needed for residential, commercial and industrial development is directly related to the intensity of development in the community. The economic life of the City is tied to the level of services, the types and intensities of land use, and the levels of demand for services and the revenue generating potential of urbanizing areas.

WATER, SEWER AND UTILITIES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The provision of domestic water, sewage treatment and utility services is essential for orderly growth and development of the community. Infrastructure types and utility services discussed here include potable and irrigation water, sanitary sewage, natural gas, electricity and telephone. The purpose of the element is to establish City policy which provides for a coordinated system of these services to adequately serve the City at full build out, identifies standards for infrastructure relative to population or land use intensity and identifies courses of action and programs which provides the means to implement the Goals and Policies.

BACKGROUND

The Water, Sewer and Utilities Element is directly related to the Land Use Element in that new development must be planned in conjunction with the extension and availability of essential infrastructure. Other related elements include Water and Energy Resources, and Flooding and Hydrology. California Government Code Section 65302(d) provides for the General Plan to address the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water. Related to the conservation and utilization of this natural resource is waste water (sewer) treatment and natural gas and electricity availability. This Element satisfies, in part, the requirement for a Conservation Element, while also addressing other utilities as allowed by Section 65303.

California Government Code Section 65103(c) requires that the planning agency "annually review the capital improvement program of the city or county and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan". This Element of the General Plan provides an effective and meaningful framework from which to comply with state law.

Domestic Water

Domestic water services are provided by the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) utilizing wells to extract groundwater. CVWD's domestic water system serving the City includes 14 wells, 7 above ground storage reservoirs (water tanks) and an extensive system of distribution lines ranging in size from 4 to 24 inches in diameter (see Exhibit VI-1). The seven reservoir tanks are located in the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains in Rancho Mirage. In 1995 there were 9 active wells in the City. Water well depths average 800 feet.

The Whitewater River subbasin serves as the groundwater repository for the Rancho Mirage area, and encompasses almost 400 square miles. City domestic water is drawn from the Upper Thermal subarea of the Whitewater River subbasin. Average water consumption per residence is 1 acre foot per year (325,829 gallons). Regulation of drinking water quality is provided by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, amended in 1986.

Groundwater extraction in the Coachella Valley has steadily increased, leading to an overdraft situation:

Fiscal Year	Acre feet extracted
1991-92	73,658
92-93	76,727
93-94	81,019
94-95	81,866

Groundwater sources are being recharged via imported water carried by the Metropolitan Water District Colorado River Aqueduct, which passes through the north end of the Coachella Valley. Major natural sources of groundwater recharge include infiltration of runoff from the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and San Bernardino Mountains. In 1994-95, 23,920 more acre feet of water were pumped out of the ground than was replenished, resulting in a 0.22% overdraft condition.

Approximately 70% of the recharge water is imported from the Colorado River, while 30% is from natural runoff. The Colorado River water is spread in surface settling ponds northwest of Palm Springs where the water is allowed to percolate into the sandy soil. The Whitewater River subbasin water table contains approximately 11 million acre feet of water. (Also see the Water Resources Element.)

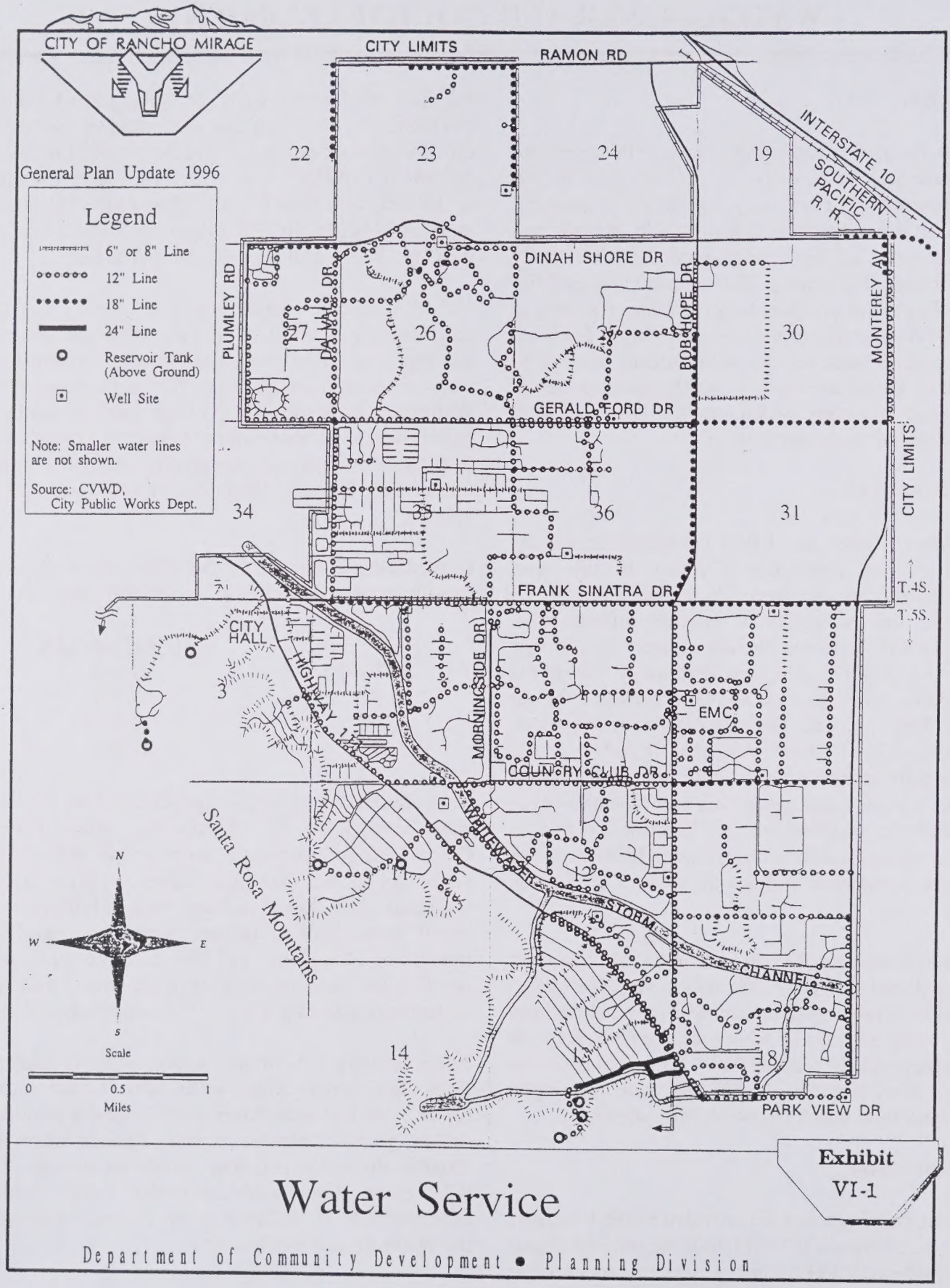


Exhibit VI-1

Water Service

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

Continued increases in demand generated by residential, commercial, and golf course development will have significant long-term cumulative impacts on the groundwater supply. While the provision of recharge water has reduced the rate of overdraft, development in the Coachella Valley is expected to continue to reduce the amount of potable groundwater in storage.

The City has adopted an ordinance to require water conserving landscape design including the use of native desert plants, drought resistant landscaping, and efficient irrigation technology in private and public landscaping applications.

The District is involved in a variety of efforts to conserve finite ground water resources. In addition to the provision of domestic water, CVWD provides landscape plan checking services and publications on the design and installation of drought tolerant landscaping. The District estimates that 60% to 80% of domestic water is used for outdoor irrigation, and that total average per capita consumption is approximately 552 gallons per day. In addition to efforts to target the domestic user, the District has also developed tertiary waste water treatment capability and is providing treated waste water to various golf courses and to public landscaped areas in the vicinity of the Cook Street treatment plant in Palm Desert (see below).

Waste Water Treatment

The Coachella Valley Water District also provides waste water treatment collection and treatment services for the City, with effluent being conveyed to the District's Cook Street plant in Palm Desert. The District has recently completed the expansion of this facility, doubling the capacity from 10 to 20 million gallons per day, and has upgraded sewer lines serving the City. The District has also expanded its waste water distribution system, adding additional golf course customers, and is modifying operations to allow 24-hour delivery of tertiary treated water.

While much of the City now utilizes the District's sewer system, substantial portions of the community still rely on septic tanks for waste water disposal. These areas include Magnesia Falls Cove, Thunderbird Cove, portions of the Peterson Road neighborhood, Thunderbird Country Club, and recently annexed lands in the northeast quadrant of the City. Residences in the Tamarisk neighborhood have recently received sewer service. See exhibit VI-2 for sewer service areas in the City.

Electric Service

Electric power services are provided by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE), and to a limited extent, the Imperial Irrigation District. SCE has transmission substations in several locations in the City. Electric power is primarily generated outside the Coachella Valley, however, SCE purchases wind generated power from local producers. SCE facilities include 12 kv transmission lines for local distribution. Higher voltage lines for more distant transmission range up to 115 kv and 230 kv lines. Substations step down voltage for local distribution and use. Three substations serve Rancho Mirage: one on Ramon Road at Bob Hope Drive, one on Clancy Lane at Monterey Avenue, and one on Plumley Road south of 35th Avenue.

A portion of the electrical service in the City is served by the Imperial Irrigation District, a water and power utility district. IID serves most of the lower Valley from Palm Desert to and including Imperial County. IID electrical rates are lower than rates charged by SCE. One explanation is that IID is a not-for-profit utility district. Businesses and industrial uses within the boundaries of IID have a distinct economic advantage in that a smaller proportion of their budgets are spent on electrical service.

On average, the typical residential electric consumer uses approximately 6,000 kilowatt hours per year. The higher summer temperatures in Rancho Mirage substantially increase the demand for electricity for air conditioning, and costs associated with this service are also significant.

SCE also offers various rebates for installation of energy efficient equipment, including refunds for the replacement of "through the wall" heat pumps; installation or replacement of a central electric heat pump; installation or replacement of a central air conditioning unit; replacement of a central electric heat pump, and others. Another program called Automatic Power Shift allows substantial savings from June through September, in exchange for allowing SCE to remotely "cycle-off" selected air conditioning units during periods of heavy use and potential power outages.

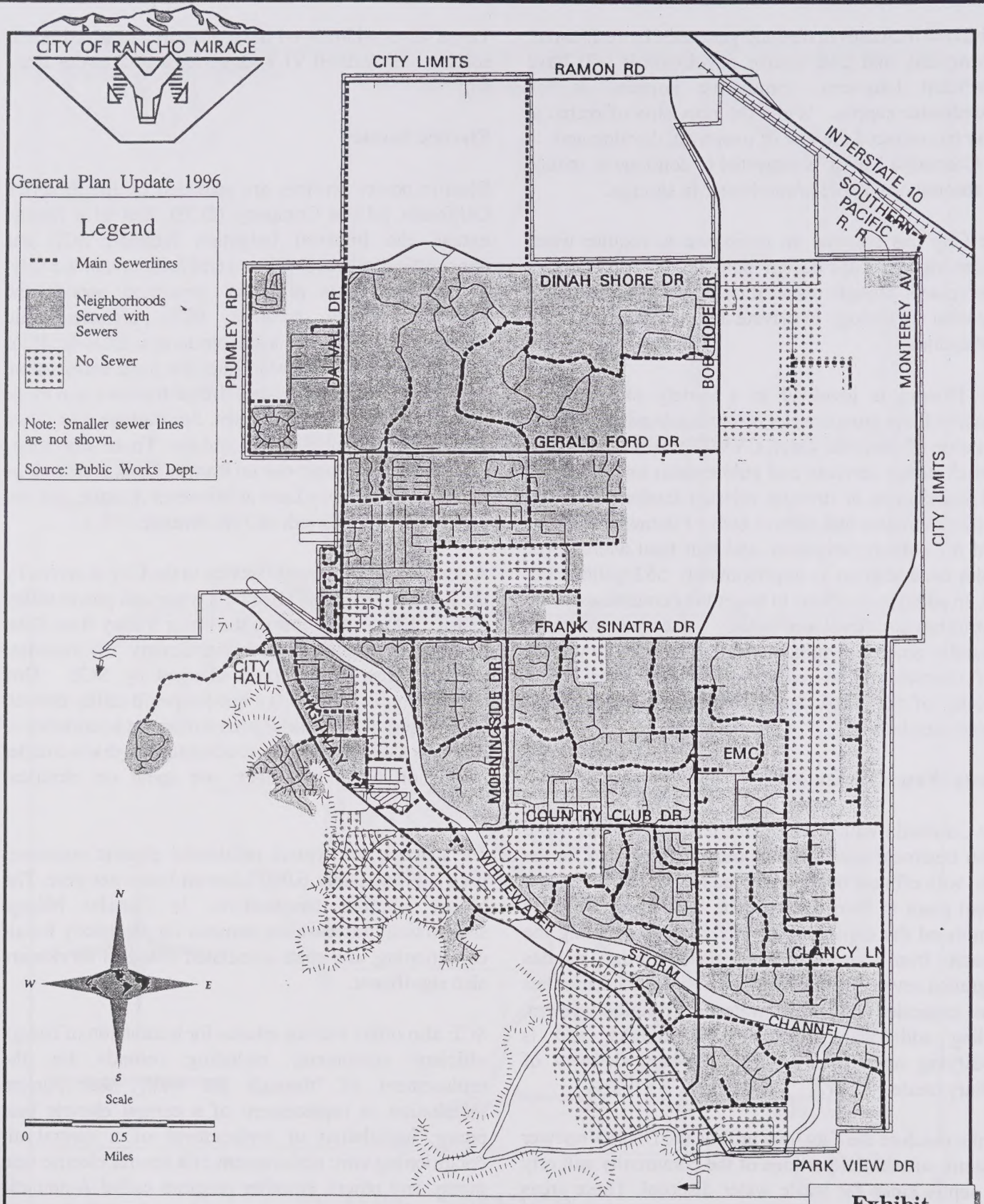


Exhibit VI-2

Sewer Service

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

Electrical rates in the Coachella Valley continue to be among the highest in the nation. Regional electric utilities monopolies have traditionally been sole purveyors in distinct geographical areas and as such, have the ability to set prices without concern for competition. However, the sale of electrical power is dramatically being changed by Congress. Recent rulings by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission require all utilities, including investor-owned companies like SCE, to open their transmission lines to competitors and to share information about available transmission capacity. Customers may no longer be bound to take power from the local utility company. The City hopes to take a leading role in reducing electricity rates for its citizens.

Natural Gas

Natural gas service is provided in the City by Southern California Gas, which has regional and local distribution lines in the City and its Sphere-of-Influence. It is used for space heating, domestic and commercial hot water, cooking and air conditioning applications. On average, the typical energy consuming household in our region uses approximately 6,600 cubic feet of natural gas each month. Services are available to all prospective users and nearby major transmission facilities assure availability for most anticipated needs, be they residential, commercial or industrial. Cost of services varies seasonally and with amount of use.

Telephone Service

Local business and residential phone services are provided to the area by General Telephone and Electronics (GTE), which has lines and switching facilities in the City. GTE provides a variety of basic and special services and features, including three types of residential service. Flat rate service allows unlimited local calls at one price. Measured service lowers the monthly rate but incremental charges for local calls. GTE's Lifeline Service is also available within certain age and income restrictions.

Local calls are considered to be any location from zero to twelve miles, and the cost of a local call has a set rate for the first minute and an additional rate for each minute thereafter. A variety of available service options include calling cards, Personal Secretary services and business 800 numbers.

Cable Television

Cable television service is provided to the City by Continental Cablevision as secured by a franchise agreement. Continental provides approximately 60 channels with current capacity for 78. In 1997 the provider will have completed upgrades to its systems, having installed a fiber optic backbone cable system and equipment to transmit at up to 550 megahertz, allowing a broader band width and ultimately more capacity and service. On the heels of this upgrade, additional fiber optic capacity up to 750 megahertz is slated for completion by the end of the century. Increased megahertz capacity results in higher reliability and more channel capacity up to 116 channels. The new fiber optic lines are the future highway for such technologies as video digital compression, and data transmission services and will allow the cable TV company to offer additional services such as telephone communications.

The current franchise agreement provides the City with up to three public access channels for information, education and public service uses. Continental has also agreed to provide the City with a grant of up to $90,000 to purchase equipment and establish facilities for broadcasting City Council meetings and other activities at City Hall. The provider has broadcast some Council meetings on an interim basis to date. An ad-hoc committee has been formed to make recommendations to the City Council on continued broadcasting of meetings in the future.

Solid Waste Disposal Services

The City contracts with Waste Management of the Desert for provision of solid waste management and disposal services. A variety of residential and commercial services are available from the service provider, including basic twice-weekly residential pick up. Waste management also offers other services to large waste generators, including restaurants, retailers, and hotels and resorts. Most trash destined for disposal at land- fills is taken to the Edom Hill Landfill, which is managed by Riverside County. Because jurisdictions are required by federal standards to reduce its landfill-bound waste stream by 50% by the year 2000, one or more materials recovery facilities will be necessary in the valley. A materials recovery facility (MRF), frequently

developed as part of a transfer facility, is a reception point for all solid waste. The waste is sorted and recyclable items are removed for reuse, and the remainder is then taken to a landfill. The City is expected to achieve the solid waste reduction goal within the specified time.

Waste Management also provides a resource recovery/recycling service to the community. This includes provision of crates or other containers for the separation of cans, glass and newsprint by residents for once a week curbside pickup. Recycling has many benefits, including preservation of landfill space for non-recyclable materials, and the preservation of energy and finite feedstock materials. This program is run in conformance with State of California Assembly Bill 939, which requires that every city and county implement programs to recycle, reduce at the source and compost 25% of its solid waste by the year 1995, and 50% by the year 2000. The City of Rancho Mirage has achieved the 1995 goal and is well on its way to meeting the next one. The recycling program at the City Hall offices is a successful model for other businesses in the community.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Water, sewer and public utilities are essential parts of community development of all types. The orderly and contiguous extension of services and facilities is integral to the logical and cost-effective extension of the urban land use pattern. The economic provision of water, energy and other public services is coordinated by the City and must be planned to adequately accommodate future growth anticipated in the General Plan. The General Plan provides service providers with important information of future service demands to allow the providers to determine how they can best be met.

In 1996 Congress passed a sweeping new Telecommunications Act rewriting sixty years of telecommunication laws. It significantly deregulated the telecommunications industry. As a result, the historical distinctions among telephone, cable and computer are beginning to disappear. Traditionally, Continental CableVision used a copper wire-coaxial cable to deliver television signals, while GTE and computer communication utilized twisted copper wires. More recently, fiber optic cabling is being used. It is cheaper, smaller, and has a greater capacity to carry large amounts of high-quality of video, data and sound. The City has a responsibility to monitor this new technology, regulate the rush anticipated of multiple providers, and plan for its installation and the needs of the City's residents into the next century.

WATER, SEWER AND UTILITIES GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

Water, sewer and utility facilities which safely and adequately meet the needs of the City at build out.

GOAL 2

Conservation of the quality and quantity of the water basin.

GOAL 3

A city-wide sewer system.

GOAL 4

Lower electrical rates.

GOAL 5

All utility lines placed underground.

Policy 1
Monitor the CVWD and Regional Water Quality Control Board to preserve and protect water resources.

Policy 2
Encourage the expanded use of tertiary treated water by supporting the efforts of CVWD to expand the capacity and distribution of such treatment facilities.

Policy 3
The City shall support the formation of neighborhood-wide Assessment Districts for the purpose of sewer installation.

Program 3.A
The City shall prepare the preliminary engineering estimates for assessment districts for sewer installation.

Policy 4
All subdivisions of ten lots or more shall be connected to sewer lines.

Policy 5
Should a sewer line exist in the right-of-way to serve a lot and a lateral line is the only connection required, sewer connection shall be required at the time the lot is developed.

Policy 6
Where a sewer line exists in the right-of-way to serve a residential unit but the unit is served by a septic system, at the point of sale the septic system shall be properly abandoned and the unit shall be connected to the sewer system.

Program 6.A
The City shall develop a list of residences and businesses not connected to the sewer system.

Program 6.B
The City shall develop a financial assistance program for sewer installation in existing neighborhoods.

Policy 7
If soil conditions do not permit proper percolation, septic systems will be prohibited.

Policy 8
The City should take a leading role in forming a cooperative program with adjacent cities to acquire ownership of the electrical distribution system.

Program 8.A
The City shall investigate the feasibility of establishing a municipal electricity district, which may include acquiring ownership of electrical transmission or distribution lines and purchasing power directly from producers.

Policy 9
Utility lines on major streets shall have primary consideration for under-grounding.

Policy 10
Major utility facilities shall be sited to assure minimal impacts to the environment and the community, and minimize potential environmental hazards.

Policy 11
The City shall encourage the coordinated and shared use of underground transmission corridors as a means of minimizing repeated excavations into the streets.

FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Police and Fire Element addresses two of the essential functions of government, which are to assure the provision of police and fire protection services. The Element reflects the City's commitment which places high priority on the best protection services possible. The City also recognizes the benefits of the high number of gated/walled communities, the larger of which typically have private security which enhances overall security for these households. Fire services are also state-of-the-art, with two stations in Rancho Mirage and cooperative, joint powers agreements with other communities for fire services. Consolidated contractual arrangements are also in place for police services, to enhance service in the most cost-effective manner possible.

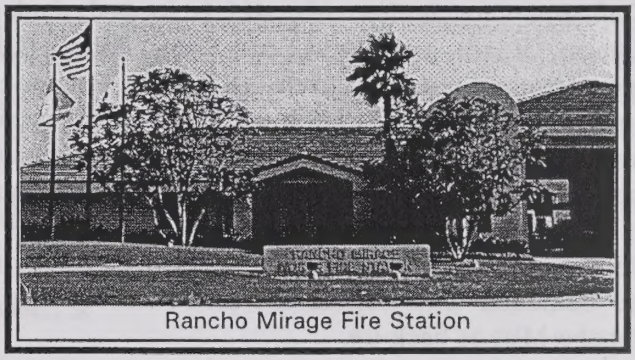
BACKGROUND

Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that a General Plan include a Safety Element, or its equivalent, for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risk associated with the effects of fire, crime or other threats. Public Resources Code Section 4125(a) also references the State Board of Forestry, which classifies lands for the purpose of establishing hazards and responsibility. Unclassified lands will fall under the jurisdiction of the City or appropriate federal agency, such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service.

Fire Protection Services

The threat of fire poses hazards to life and property. Given the City's generally sparsely vegetated open desert lands and hillsides, developed areas are the source of most service calls. Fire protection is provided to the City by the Riverside County Fire Department under contract to the California Department of Forestry. A typical response to a fire will place 8 personnel, including a battalion chief, on the scene within 5 minutes. This includes fire fighters and certified paramedics.

The service contract for fire protection is entered into jointly by the Public Safety Commission, which includes the Cities of Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, and Indian Wells, functioning through a Joint Powers Agreement. Funds for these services come from a city-wide "fire tax" levied on raw acreage, residential dwelling units, and commercial developments. The Riverside County Fire Department maintains thirteen fire stations in the upper Coachella Valley. The following fire stations are well situated to provide fire protection services to the City and its Sphere-of-Influence, and include two stations located within the city limits.


Rancho Mirage Fire Station

Rancho Mirage Station, No. 50 is located on Highway 111 between Thunderbird Cove and Thunderbird Heights. This station is equipped with one 1250 gallons per minutes (gpm) telesquirt fire truck staffed by paid personnel and one paramedic unit staffed by two paid paramedic fire fighters.

Rancho Mirage Station, No. 69 is located on Gerald Ford Drive, less than one quarter mile west of Bob Hope Drive. This station is staffed with two paid personnel with one engine.

Palm Desert Station, No. 33 is located on Town Center Way, just south of Fred Waring Drive in Palm Desert, less than one-half mile from the Rancho Mirage city limits. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with one 1250 gpm telesquirt fire truck, one 102' ladder truck company, one paramedic unit with

two paramedics fire fighters, and one mobile air chamber (breathing support) unit manned by volunteers.

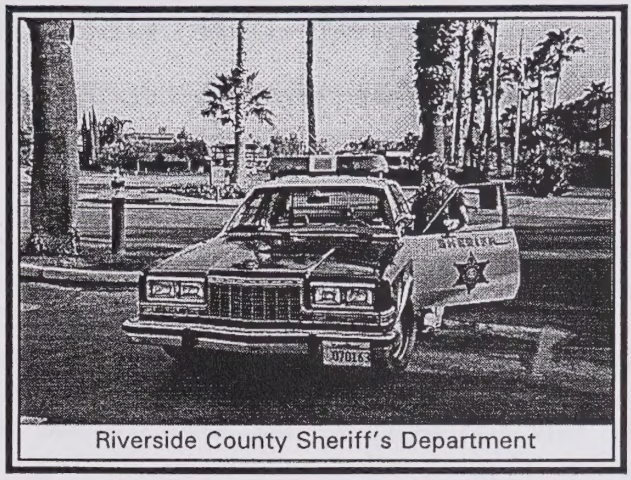
Palm Desert Station, No. 71 is located at the intersection of Portola and Country Club Drives. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with one telesquirt ladder truck including pumping unit, and a medic unit with two medics.

Cathedral City Station, No 411 is located on Date Palm Drive in Cathedral City, approximately one mile from the western Rancho Mirage city limits. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with a new type of fire engine, which includes medical transport capabilities, a 1250 gpm pumper truck (for reserve), and a part-time squad of paid reserves. Response time to Rancho Mirage could be slightly higher than the desired five minutes from this station.

Cathedral City Station, No. 412 is located south of Ramon Road and west of Date Palm Drive approximately one mile from the Rancho Mirage city limits. This station is staffed with paid personnel and equipped with a 100' ladder truck company, a medic unit with paramedic fire fighters, and a part time squad of paid reserves. Because the Riverside County Fire Department has an extensive network of fire stations, the Cathedral City stations are called infrequently as Rancho Mirage back-up.

Thousand Palms Station, No. 35 is located at 72-695 La Canada Way just east of Varner Road in Thousand Palms. This station is equipped with one 1250 gpm pumper truck staffed by paid personnel and one squad of volunteers.

National Fire Insurance Organizations and the National Fire Protection Association formally recommend, respectively, a maximum three mile and five minute response parameter for siting fire stations. While existing levels of service appear adequate to protect existing improvements in the City, continued growth may stimulate the need for additional fire stations. Further consultation and coordination with local fire officials will be required to determine the optimum location for additional future facilities.


Riverside County Sheriff's Department

Police Protection Services

Police protection in the City is provided on a service contract basis by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, which operates out of the Palm Desert Station. Office facilities for Sheriff's personnel are also provided in City Hall. In 1996, 16 police-personnel served the City, providing three patrol cars on duty at all times, an additional patrol car for traffic enforcement twelve hours per day, and a two person plain-clothes "target team" to focus on specific crimes. In 1996, the City provided a ratio of 1 officer per 688 population, well above the commonly accepted ratio of 1 officer per 1000 population.

Police response times can vary significantly, depending on the location of patrol cars at the time of a call. The average emergency response time in Rancho Mirage is 4 minutes or less to any location. Methods to reduce or prevent crime include adequate street and security lighting, and development of "defensible space". Defensible space permits surveillance and provides the highest possible level of security, use of appropriate security hardware, and building siting and visibility. The City also promotes the Neighborhood Watch Program. This program exists in both public neighborhoods and private communities. The Sheriff's Department has indicated that the relatively high number of walled and gated communities in the City does not necessarily result in a measurable reduction in crime.

To understand the issue of crime it is imperative to consider geographic, demographic, economic and other factors specific to a jurisdiction. The transience of the

population, its composition by age and gender, education levels, and prevalent family conditions with respect to the family unit is correlated to crime statistics. Considering a jurisdiction's industrial/ economic base, economic conditions relating to median income, poverty level, job availability, dependence on neighboring jurisdictions, and transportation systems are all key factors in assessing and understanding the crime issue.

The strength and effectiveness of law enforcement in a city should also be considered when comparing crime statistics. One city may report more crime than another, not because there is more crime, but rather because its law enforcement, through proactive efforts, identifies more offenses. A high ratio of officers-to-population allows identification and reporting of crimes more effectively. Attitudes of the citizens toward crime influences their crime reporting practices, especially concerning more minor offenses. This will have an impact on the volume of crimes reported to police.

The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which would result from continued development, cannot be estimated with confidence and will vary from community to community. The substantial numbers of gated communities with their own security services probably reduces the demand for police services in the City. Nonetheless, it can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police protection services and personnel.

Citizens on Patrol

The Citizens on Patrol (COPS) program is a group of volunteers 55 years of age and over who voluntarily patrol the City. Started in 1993, the program currently has more than 29 trained volunteers, and is targeted ultimately for a force of 40. Supported by the City, COPS volunteers receive training by the Sheriff's Department and the Palm Springs Police Academy. The COPS volunteers operate a city-owned van, using the Sheriff's annex at City Hall as their base. The City provides uniforms and badges for the volunteers. The COPS volunteers are considered to be "extended eyes and ears of the Sheriff". Other cities have sent representatives to Rancho Mirage to study the COPS program.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The distribution of land uses and anticipated development pattern will continue to directly impact the City's ability to provide adequate fire and police protection. The availability of staff and equipment and the need to provide protection services within a minimum time frame affects the responsiveness of the City's police and fire departments. Development in the City that is distant from services may risk longer response times, which must be considered in land use planning, circulation/traffic planning, the provision of fire flows, and in emergency preparedness planning.

It can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police and fire protection services and personnel. The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which will result from continued development, cannot be estimated with confidence and will vary from community to community. Fire protection needs are more easily established but are highly dependant upon the location, type and intensity of future development.

FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A high level of police and fire protection and paramedic service.

Policy 1
All new and improved developments shall be reviewed for their impact on safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.

Policy 2
Enforce fire standards and regulations in the course of reviewing building plans and conducting building inspections.

Policy 3
Potentially hazardous material use and storage shall be regulated by the City and other appropriate agencies.

Policy 4
Due to the fire hazard potential of hilly areas with slopes of 10 percent or greater, access problems, lack of water or sufficient pressure, and excessively dry

brush, special on-site fire protection measures shall be specified during project review.

Policy 5
Emergency police, fire and paramedic vehicle access shall be provided with all new development to the satisfaction of the City.

Policy 6
The City shall assist the Sheriff's Department in promoting the Neighborhood Watch Program.

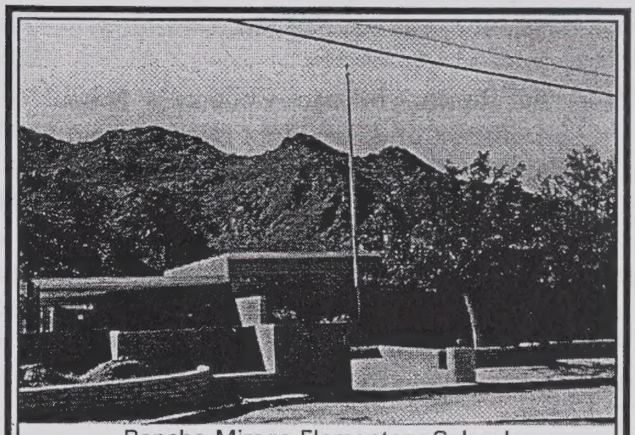
Policy 7
Promote walled and gated communities recognizing their potential effect on reducing crime in the City.

Policy 8
The City shall support the Citizens on Patrol program.

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Element is to describe school and library facilities in the City and surrounding serving area, and provide guidance and direction for decision makers to ensure support and convenient access to these essential services. City residents of all ages deserve the opportunity to gain a basic education and to continue to expand their personal and professional horizons through these important educational and cultural resources. The convenience and safe accessibility of the City's school and library facilities depend upon the community's land use pattern, and the efficiency and safety of its streets, and the availability of bicycle lanes/paths and public transit.


Rancho Mirage Elementary School

BACKGROUND

Continued residential development activity, a larger permanent population, and the increased percentage of families with school-age children can be expected to increase pressures on the local school districts who are required by law to provide school facilities to accommodate students. The City is served by two public school districts: the Palm Springs Unified School District, serving all of the City except that portion east of Bob Hope Drive, and the Desert Sands Unified School District serving the rest of the community.

California Government Code Section 65302(a) requires that, among other things, the General Plan assess the general distribution and location of educational facilities, and determine the adequacy of these facilities.

As of 1996, the Palm Springs Unified School District has located one elementary school within the City, the Rancho Mirage Elementary School on Indian Trail Road in the Magnesia Falls Cove area. It provides class levels K through 6, with approximately 560 students. Students living in Rancho Mirage must currently attend middle and high school level education in surrounding communities. There are no Desert Sands Unified schools in Rancho Mirage.

Both the Palm Springs and Desert Sands Unified School Districts have declared that their facilities are overcrowded. In addition to permanent classroom facilities, both Districts use portable classroom buildings on most campuses. The Palm Springs School District Master Plan includes two future elementary school sites in the City: one in Section 27 east of Plumley Road in the vicinity of Vista Montana, and one in Section 30 between Bob Hope Drive and Monterey Avenue south of Dinah Shore Drive. The Land Use map includes references to these future school sites.

When the State of California reduced funding for public schools, it passed legislation effective January 1, 1987 to permit school districts to levy a per square-foot fee for residential, commercial and industrial development. These fees must be paid by developers directly to the school district prior to the issuance of building permits. The fees are used to assist in the construction or reconstruction of school facilities. In 1996 the residential school fee was $1.84 per square foot and the commercial per square-foot fee was $0.30.

Private Schools

Three private schools also serve the City. The following descriptions and student enrollments are as of the 1995-96 school year.

- Marywood Country Day School provides education for preschool age through Grade 6. It is located on Clancy Lane, and has an enrollment of 130 students.

- The Palm Valley School is located on Da Vall Drive, north of Dinah Shore Drive, and provides classroom instruction for grades K-12. Its current enrollment is 208 students. This relatively new facility is a master planned campus with substantial space for future expansion.

- The Rancho Mirage Children's School has an enrollment of 43 children ranging from preschool age through Grade 5. This facility is located on San Jacinto Drive in the vicinity of the Rancho Mirage Post Office.

In the future should the state institute a Voucher Program, a redistribution of students between public and private schools may result.

Libraries

In 1991 the City withdrew from the Riverside County Library system and made plans to provide its own library. There was no county library in the City; it was felt that the County system did not provide the level of service desired, and library funds annually channeled to the County could more effectively be used to fund a City Library. The City purchased a vacant 10,887 square foot bank building at Bob Hope Drive and Highway 111 and opened its library there in January, 1996, with 15,000 volumes and projections of up to 35,000 volumes in 5 years. Other facilities include a small community meeting room/audio-visual center, a children's collection with a variety of materials and formats, a computer room, and electronic card catalogue terminals. While patrons will continue to rely on books and other printed materials, future visions of the library include increasing reliance on electronic access to information resources.

The Eisenhower Medical Center has a medical library, however, no lending to non-hospital staff is permitted. The College of the Desert, in partnership with the County Library system and the City of Palm Desert, recently (1996) constructed a new on-campus college and community library. It will include the availability of computer terminals and other state-of-the-art research facilities.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City's schools and library are important community assets that support City children and adults and are an important barometer of the social health of the City and its quality of life. These assets are also an important consideration for many considering residing in the City. As the city continues to urbanize towards Interstate-10, demographics can be anticipated to shift from higher end, second homes to more moderately priced and year-round occupied single family homes. Schools will become increasingly important to the City's population. Schools and libraries are land use sensitive and their location requires consideration of many factors, including student safety, accessibility, impacts from noise and other factors.

Public school districts are "responsible agencies" and have "lead agency" status for the siting, planning and processing of development approvals. While consultation with local jurisdictions is required, most decisions rest with the school district, with building, planning and design processed and approved by the State Architect's Office. Nonetheless, the City can assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning and provision of educational facilities to provide a maximum opportunity for the education of residents of the City.

The General Plan provides the City with the opportunity to establish policies and programs to reserve and protect existing and future school and library sites from excessive noise and traffic conditions and ensure accessibility and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT GOALS, POLICIES AND, PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

Education and library facilities that provide the City with adequate services and convenient access.

Policy 1
The City shall assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning, site acquisition, development and provision of educational facilities for the residents of the City.

Program 1.A
The City should investigate the feasibility of creating a charter school.

Policy 2
The City shall cooperate in the process to secure school impact fees from developers in accordance with state law, and strive to reduce overcrowding and improve the educational quality of the City's public school system.

Policy 3
The City shall preserve and protect existing and future school sites, to the greatest extent practical, from excessive noise and traffic conditions and ensure compatible surrounding land uses.

Policy 4
As appropriate, the City shall pursue agreements with the school district(s) to assist in the purchase, lease or joint use of land for school and recreation purposes and the provision of recreation facilities to increase the supply of local park acreage and facilities for school students and to provide accessible recreation facilities and open space for the neighboring community during non-school hours.

Policy 5
The City shall ensure that adequate library services, space and volumes are available to satisfy the literary and educational needs of its residents.

HEALTH SERVICES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

This Element is to provides information on the various health care facilities and services available in the City and vicinity. Health care services range from the family practitioner to surgical and other specialists working in a hospital environment. Accessible health care facilities and services are an essential part of the community's professional services.

With an older average population in Rancho Mirage, health care facilities and services are important determinants for many would-be residents considering relocation to the City. As with most other areas of community planning, the availability of health care is an essential component of community planning. Issues of medical services/facilities availability are also associated with other areas of community planning, including land use distribution, traffic and circulation, emergency preparedness, and fire and police protection.

BACKGROUND

The Health Facilities Element is related to the Emergency Preparedness, Public Buildings and Facilities, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials Elements. It also addresses locational criteria and is therefore related to the Land Use and Circulation Elements as well. This Element is included in the General Plan as an optional Element pursuant to Government Code Section 65303 because of the prominence of health related facilities in the City.

Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley provide a broad range of medical services and research facilities, as well as convalescent hospitals and similar facilities. The City of Rancho Mirage has shown a particular interest in assuring the provision of health care facilities, including hospitals, clinics, medical specialists, and convalescent care.

Eisenhower Medical Center

The availability of medical services and facilities has been an important consideration for many of the area's residents, and in Rancho Mirage particularly, with its

Eisenhower Medical Center

own prestigious medical facility, Eisenhower Medical Center (EMC). With over 1,800 employees, EMC is by far the largest employer in the City, as well as the premier medical treatment and research facility in the Coachella Valley. The EMC campus encompasses approximately 100 acres and includes the Eisenhower Memorial Hospital, the Annenberg Center for World Health Science, Betty Ford Center for Chemical Dependency, Delores Hope Care Center, Barbara Sinatra Children's Center, the Community Blood Bank, and a variety of medical office and research buildings. Recently the Hanson Birthing Center was added to provide obstetrics services to growing families. EMC is licensed for and operates 290 beds, at least 15 of which are in Intensive Care, and 14 of which are in the Birthing Center. Average occupancy is about 80%. Future development and expansion of EMC is expected, as was the case with the recent expansion of emergency room facilities and development of a trauma center. Master planning of the Eisenhower campus has been accomplished through the adoption of a Specific Plan, which sets forth the ultimate buildout of facilities on campus.

The Heart Institute of the Desert

The Heart Institute is located at Hope Square, adjacent to the Eisenhower Medical Center campus, and specializes in by-pass and other coronary care specialties. This state-of-the-art facility has the lowest

mortality rate for open heart surgery in the United States. It recently underwent a major expansion to its facility to include a twelve- bed hospital wing.

Rancho Mirage Healthcare Center

Rancho Mirage Healthcare Center located on Country Club Drive, provides convalescent hospital services in a skilled nursing environment, primarily for patients on a rapid recovery track following surgery. The center also provides hospice care for the terminally ill. The center has 99 beds and is a qualified medicare facility.

Other Health Care Providers

In Rancho Mirage, medically related uses are beginning to cluster in the Bob Hope Drive-Country Club Drive area. Hope Square is a 33-acre medically-related office park with two phases complete. The Mirage Center dental surgery facility on Country Club Drive is a newer 16,750 square foot building with space available on the site for expansion. The City would like to encourage its focus on existing and future medically related uses in this geographic area.

Other Valley hospitals capable of providing health care services include Desert Hospital in Palm Springs and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Indio. Desert Hospital is licensed for 350 beds; the occupancy rate is approximately 80%. Twenty-four hour Emergency and Trauma Center facilities are available with at least one full time physician on duty. Desert Hospital also has a Home Health Care department that provides in-home nursing and household maintenance services. The Hospice of the Desert is also housed at Desert Hospital, providing specialized service and counseling to the terminally ill. The John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital is licensed for 130 beds, and provides twenty-four hour emergency care facilities, and is a base for paramedic service.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Hospitals and convalescent facilities are regarded as sensitive land uses and should be located in areas not subject to excessive noise levels or high levels of air pollution. The General Plan plays an important role in assuring the long-term viability of the City's health care facilities by regulating surrounding land uses and minimizing adverse impacts from traffic, noise and other conditions. The Eisenhower Medical Center Specific Plan will be incorporated into the General Plan by reference and will assure consistency between these two regulatory documents. The General Plan also provides opportunities to establish goals and policies that encourage the development of additional medical and health care and possibly research facilities, particularly in the vicinity of EMC, that address the changing demographics of the community and capitalize on the City's economic dominance in the health care field.

HEALTH SERVICES GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

High quality of health care facilities and services to promote the good health and well-being of the City's residents.

Policy 1
Coordinate with all medical service providers within the City to assure adequate health care facilities and services to meet the needs of the City's residents.

Policy 2
Encourage the development of medical and health care facilities which address the changing demographics and the City's desire to expand the economic base of the community.

Policy 3
The EMC Specific Plan shall serve as the development guide for the campus.

Policy 4
Hospitals, convalescent, assisted care and similar type facilities shall be located in areas not subject to excessive noise levels.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Element is to provide information on the critical facilities necessary to effectively respond in the event of an emergency. It also identifies the various potential impacts of significant man-made and natural hazards within or affecting the community and how they direct emergency preparedness. The City's capabilities in responding to natural and man-made disasters are also identified. The City's substantial potential exposure to major seismic events and flooding threats cannot be prevented, but preparation can be made for an effective response. Man-made threats include wildland and urban fires, hazardous materials spills and leaks, and major transportation accidents, including automobiles, trucks, trains and aircraft. The element sets forth goals, policies and programs designed to allow the City to be prepared for emergency threats.

BACKGROUND

Concern regarding emergency preparedness is directly related to the Geotechnical Element (where seismic hazards are discussed), the Flooding and Hydrology Element, the Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element, and the Police and Fire Protection Element. Other related Elements include Land Use, which affects essential relationships of use to location-specific threats, and Circulation, which defines the availability of, and need for securing evacuation routes in the event of an emergency in the community. Applicable law includes Government Code section 65302(g), which states that the General Plan shall address "the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure...; slope instability leading to mudslides or landslides".

The Coachella Valley is subject to significant hazards, which constitute serious threats to life and property. The Valley's substantial potential for earthquakes and flooding are natural occurrences which can be anticipated but cannot be prevented. However, the magnitude of the effect of natural disasters on life and property can be addressed, and a coherent response to such disasters prepared. The goal is to have a realistic assessment of the potential for disaster and response plans for recovery after a disaster has occurred. Due to the large number of public, quasi-public, and private agencies involved in emergency preparedness planning, and their differing areas of responsibility, cooperation and coordination between agencies are essential.

Communications is the critical element in any emergency response capability and must be maintained even in the event of wide ranging disastrous events. Cities, emergency and safety agencies, water districts, utilities, and other involved private agencies must be able to remain in contact in order to coordinate the provision of supplies and personnel. To this end, it is imperative that regular and effective on-going organizational meetings be held in order to assure the efficient and responsive provision of emergency services and supplies.

The development of a carefully conceived emergency preparedness plan includes a disaster operations plan, which sets forth the organization and administration of disaster response efforts such as debris removal, evacuation and emergency communications, law enforcement, fire protection and rescue, the provision of health care and emergency shelter, allocation of emergency food and medical supplies, and the maintenance and restoration of critical services, including transportation, water and sewage, electricity, natural gas and telephone service.

Critical Facilities

Certain critical facilities will become essential in the event of a major emergency and are an essential part of the emergency response plan. These include facilities that provide or house emergency services, including hospitals, fire stations, police and emergency services facilities, governmental operations and utility facilities, especially telecommunications. Commercial radio stations can also play an essential role in appraising the community of appropriate actions to take.

Other critical facilities include evacuation routes and peak load water supply and delivery systems. Evacuation routes may play an especially critical role by allowing

the evacuation and/or the delivery of ground-based assistance access to affected parts of the City.

Emergency Transportation and Circulation

One of the single most important activities after a major disaster is the delivery of emergency personnel and relief supplies. Access to the community can be affected by major damage from natural forces, including earthquakes and flooding. Therefore, all-weather and earthquake-resistant bridges, culverts, and roads adjoining cut slopes must be given careful attention. Programs can be developed in close coordination with CalTrans, Riverside County and adjoining cities to assure maximum functional integrity of major roads serving the City.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance to the City and victims of a disaster can come from several sources, with the state and federal governments being the most important. In order to qualify for this assistance, the City must declare a local emergency within 10 days of the actual occurrence of the disaster, have damages assessed, and must apply for aid within 60 days of declaring the local emergency (Government Code Section 8680-8692).

Emergency Preparedness Coordination

The Riverside County Office of Disaster Preparedness is the responsible lead agency for the coordination of the various agencies in the event of an emergency. In the City, the fire station on Highway 111 east of Country Club Drive serves as the base of operations for emergency response. In addition to City staff assigned to specific tasks, ranging from management and coordination to field operations, the City has agreements with local contractors to augment public agency resources and capabilities.

Emergency Preparedness Commission

Since 1991, the City has had a five-member Emergency Preparedness Commission involved in a variety of projects. Commission members present information to homeowners associations for training and education regarding emergency shelters. City staff is responsible for the City's two medical caches and shelter kits in conjunction with the American Red Cross. One of the Commission's goals is to encourage all private community groups to purchase 40-channel citizen band (CB) radios. This commission also has a physicians subcommittee to coordinate deployment of medical personnel that are well linked to Eisenhower Medical Center. The Commission works closely with Riverside County in the development and dissemination of information to the public advising the community on how to prepare for and cope with an emergency.

Multi-Hazard Functional Plan

The City is one of the few jurisdictions in the Valley which has an adopted emergency preparedness plan, called the Multi-Hazard Functional Plan. Based on a similar document adopted by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, the City's Plan has also been endorsed by the Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Adopted by Resolution, the plan is hereby incorporated by reference into this Element.

FUTURE DIRECTION

In addition to the detailed organizational directives, scopes of responsibility, operational priorities, authority and powers established in the City's emergency response plan, emergency communication protocols and other components of the response plan require close multi-agency coordination. The ability of the community to respond to emergencies will also be affected by the distribution of land uses and the location of future fire stations and other public safety facilities. Development standards set forth in the City's zoning ordinance will also determine how effectively emergency personnel can respond to events affecting occupied structures.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ELEMENT

GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A coordinated, responsive, and effective emergency preparedness disaster implementation plan and a high degree of readiness to respond to disastrous events.

Policy 1
Public facilities shall be developed and sited to assure maximum protection from environmental hazards such as earthquakes and flood waters.

Policy 2
The City shall coordinate emergency preparedness activities with the State Office of Emergency Services.

Policy 3
The City shall continue to coordinate with Riverside County in the development and dissemination of information to the public advising the community on how to prepare for and cope with an emergency.

Policy 4
The City shall coordinate with Riverside County regarding a community response plan and the County's Multi-Hazard Functional Plan.

Program 4. A
The City shall develop and update a Community Response Plan.

Program 4. B
Adopt by reference the Riverside County Multi-Hazard Functional Plan (including future amendments) as the City's Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Policy 5
Encourage and assist private communities in the preparation of emergency preparedness plans.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

PURPOSE

This Element provides background information on the various structures and facilities in the City operated by public and quasi-public agencies, and describes some of the long-term planning issues associated with them. It is also meant to provide sufficient information to identify important and critical facilities and to assure coordinated planning and development that keeps pace with growth in the community. The element also sets forth the goal, policies and programs, which address the long-term planning needs of the community.

Public facilities are built to accommodate present and anticipated needs, some of which (most notably utilities) play a major role in determining the location, intensity, and appropriate timing of future development. Each year, local governmental agencies planning the construction of capital facilities (including cities, counties, school districts, and special districts) must submit a list to the planning agency (Government Code Section 65401) of proposed projects they would like to implement in the City. In the case of Rancho Mirage, the planning agency must then review the projects for conformity with the General Plan.

BACKGROUND

The City is host to a variety of public buildings and facilities, and associated issues have long been of concern in Rancho Mirage. They range from City Hall and the two community fire stations to water wells and electric power substations. They also include electric, telephone, and cable television transmission lines, schools, the new Rancho Mirage Public Library, and the soon to be built Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert. Roads and bridges, traffic signals and support facilities, and bus shelters also fall under this category. The Public Buildings and Facilities Element is directly related to the Land Use, Circulation, and Community Design Elements. All six other Elements in the Public Services and Facilities Chapter are interrelated and associated with this Element. Most public buildings and utility sites are shown on the General Plan map.

Government Code Section 65103(c) states that the planning agency is to "annually review the Capital Improvement Program of the City or County and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan...". However, the local jurisdiction may emphasize the importance of this issue by requiring an optional Public Facilities Element in the General Plan (Government Code Section 65303).

The City of Rancho Mirage is a unique resort residential community with a wide range of public buildings and facilities utilized for the benefit of community residents and visitors. While much of the discussion focuses on buildings, lands and facilities of the City, utility buildings and substations are also given special attention with regard to their compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The location of public buildings and facilities is largely dependent upon their function in the community. This functional criteria does not preclude the need for these facilities to be logically integrated into the existing and planned land use patterns of the City. Those public buildings, which serve as offices where residents and business people come to conduct business, should be conveniently located and provided with safe access and adequate parking.

Utility Infrastructure

In contrast, utility infrastructure, including electrical substations, and pumping and switching facilities can generate noise and detract from the scenic values of an area. Methods typically used to integrate utility infrastructure with the surrounding area can include decorative block walls and landscape buffers around major facilities, or the construction of telephone and other equipment buildings in an architectural style compatible with the surrounding built environment. The GTE switching station on Da Vall Drive, north of Gerald Ford Drive, is a good example of how utility buildings can be designed to complement rather than detract from surrounding development. The City has also been a leader in the undergrounding of utility transmission lines and collects fees at the building permit stage to help fund

this effort. An example of the impact of this policy and its implementation is dramatically shown the Community Design Element.

Rancho Mirage City Hall

The Rancho Mirage City Hall is an unusual and uniquely sited complex of buildings that includes the Council chambers, administrative offices and support facilities. The City has recently completed construction of an expansion of City Hall to meet current and anticipated future space needs. The 17,605 square foot facility was expanded to provide a total of 27,677 square feet within a basement and two above-ground floors. The remodel and expansion of City Hall was completed in June 1996. Notable space included in the expansion include a large conference room, multiple smaller meeting rooms, and a Sheriff's Annex shared with the COPS program.

Corporate Yard/Maintenance Facility

In 1995, the City moved its maintenance yard and facilities from the City Hall site to a new location outside the city limits, on Varner Road in Thousand Palms. These facilities include a garage of about 4,500 square feet for equipment maintenance and storage, and an office/locker room/lounge building of about 800 square feet. The corporate yard site encompasses about three-quarters of an acre. There is room for future expansion to provide showers and locker room facilities as well as space for equipment and vehicles, as the need arises.

Bus Shelters

The City of Rancho Mirage has taken the lead in raising the design standard for these facilities. Rather than the typical steel, concrete and plexi-glass shelters with more of an industrial look, the City has adopted and implemented design standards based upon Mission and Mediterranean architectural styles, which complement the surrounding built environment. Examples of these facilities include shelters at the Michael Wolfson Park and at the Eisenhower Medical Center. Placement of future bus shelters, coordinated with the Sunline Transit Authority, should consider convenience to major employment and shopping centers and other destinations that bus service could best serve.

Fire Stations

The placement of fire stations is based on a geographic analysis of service area response time and is location sensitive. The City has made a concerted effort to assure the highest level of community protection, while providing facilities that are well designed and integrated into the surrounding built environment. Stations on Highway 111 and Gerald Ford Drive illustrate how highly functional design needs can be met with pleasing and sensitive building design and site planning. Fire and Paramedic services are paid for via a fire tax on parcels in the City. These facilities are also discussed in the Police and Fire Protection Element.

U.S. Post Office

The U.S. Post Office, located on Rancho Las Palmas Drive just north of Highway 111, provides a full service facility utilizing contemporary architectural design

Rancho Mirage Post Office

standards. This facility encompasses approximately 13,000 sq. ft. and provides all the basic postal services offered in most other facilities, including post office boxes, voter registration, mail boxes, shipping services and postage stamp sales. The site accommodates outdoor postal vehicle storage and parking areas for customers and employees.

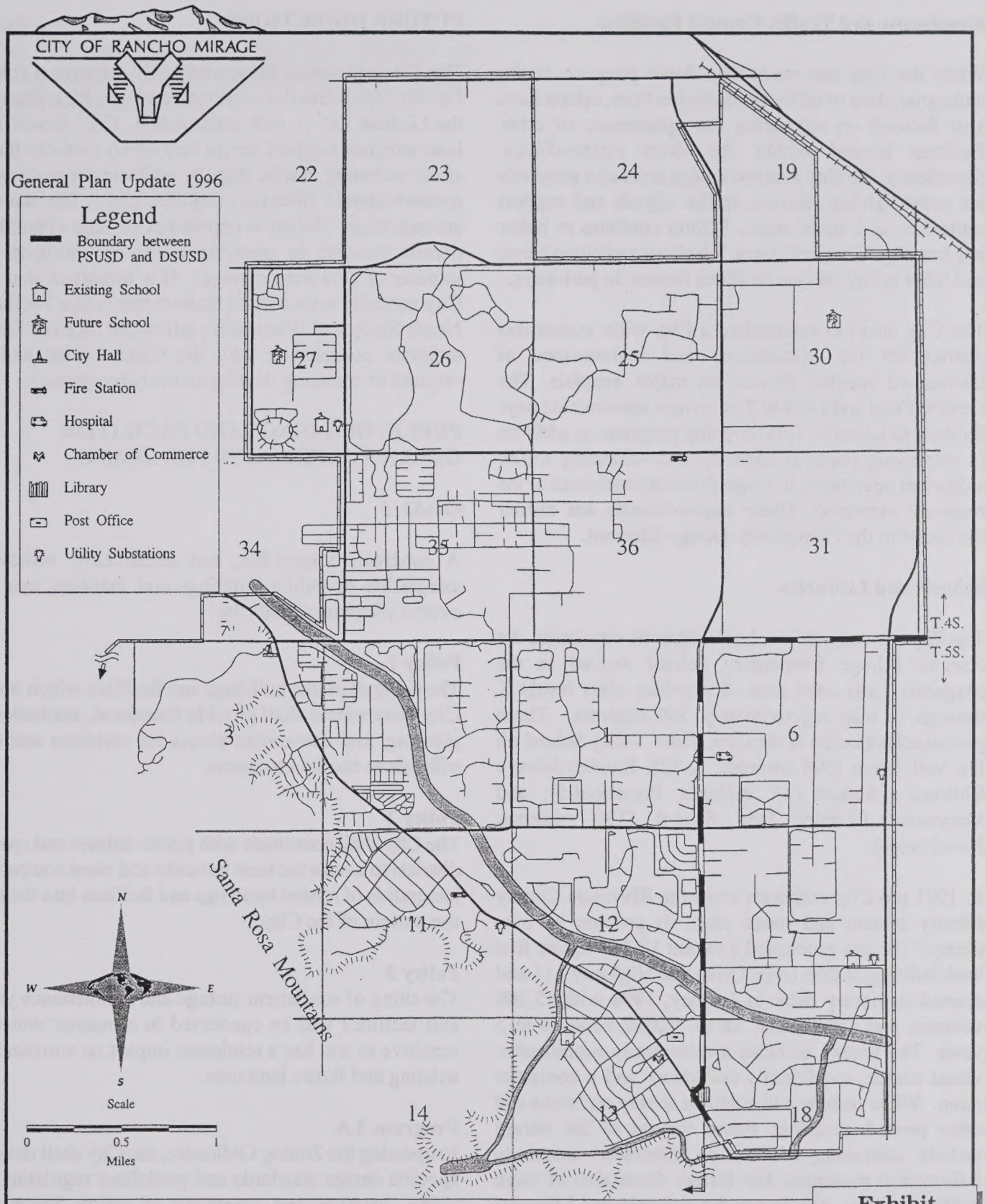


Exhibit VI-3

Public Facilities

Department of Community Development • Planning Division

Streetscape and Traffic Control Facilities

While the City has made significant progress in the undergrounding of utility transmission lines, efforts have also focused on enhancing the appearance of other facilities located within the street rights-of-way. Specifically, the City adopted design and paint standards for street lighting fixtures, traffic signals and support standards, and street signs. Efforts continue to better integrate signal control boxes, telephone switching boxes and other utility service facilities located in parkways.

The City also has established a City-wide assessment district for the installations and maintenance of landscaped median islands on major arterials. The General Fund and License Tax on new construction pays for their installation. This on-going program, in addition to preserving roadway capacity and enhancing traffic safety and operations, is a significant enhancement of the roadway viewshed. These improvements are further discussed in the Community Design Element.

Schools and Libraries

The City has one public school within its city limits, the Rancho Mirage Elementary School located in the Magnesia Falls cove area. It provides class levels K through 6, with approximately 560 students. Three private schools exist in the City: Palm Valley School on Da Vall Drive (208 students, K-12); Rancho Mirage Children's School (43 students, Preschool-5); and Marywood Country Day School (130 students, Preschool-6).

In 1991 the City withdrew from the Riverside County Library system and made plans to provide its own library. The city purchased a vacant 10,887 square foot bank building at Bob Hope Drive and Highway 111 and opened its library there in January, 1996 with 15,000 volumes and projections up to 35,000 volumes in 5 years. The library includes a community room/audio-visual center, a children's collection, and a computer room. While patrons will continue to rely on books and other printed materials, future visions of the library include increasing reliance on electronic access to information resources. For further discussion of these public facilities, please see the Schools and Libraries Element.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The City of Rancho Mirage annually prepares a Public Facility Needs Study to serve as the basis for collecting the License Tax on new construction. The License Tax is an integrated impact fee (or tax) which partially funds street widening, traffic signals, utility undergrounding, median islands, bikeways, bridges, parks, fire stations and public art. The tax is imposed at the time of building permit issuance to meet the needs and mitigate the impacts of new development. It is important that the City annually reviews and updates the Public Facilities Needs Study and if necessary adjust the License Tax to maintain consistency with the General Plan and to respond to changing development characteristics.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES GOALS. POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

A coherent, compatible, and aesthetically satisfying integration of public buildings and facilities into the overall planning of the City.

Policy 1
The siting of public buildings and facilities which house City government shall provide functional, aesthetically pleasing, and convenient places for residents and city officials to conduct business.

Policy 2
The City shall coordinate with public utilities and special districts to assure the least intrusive and most compatible integration of related buildings and facilities into the land use pattern of the City.

Policy 3
The siting of equipment storage and maintenance yards and facilities will be conducted in a manner which is sensitive to and has a minimum impact on surrounding existing and future land uses.

Program 3.A
In updating the Zoning Ordinance, the City shall develop specific design standards and guidelines regulating the siting, location and screening of utility boxes and facilities.

Policy 4

The City shall ensure that all public buildings and facilities comply with the same development standards as private development.

ARTS AND CULTURE ELEMENT

PURPOSE

Aesthetic values of the City are reflected throughout the community's planning efforts and provide the basis for cultural identification. The Arts and Culture Element sets forth policies and programs that maximize the role the City can play in encouraging and supporting the cultural development of the community. In addition to the direct support given to City-sponsored activities and facilities, the City can also play an important role in helping to encourage and enhance the activities of public and private nonprofit enterprises supporting the arts e. The purpose and intent of this involvement is to foster a better understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the cultural environment in Rancho Mirage.

BACKGROUND

Directly related Elements include the Archaeological and Historical Resources Element, which conveys the past cultural traditions of the Native Americans and early settlers. The Open Space and Conservation Element reflects the high degree of importance the community places upon its natural environment and open and wild lands, including the Santa Rosa Mountains and other natural resources in and near Rancho Mirage. In addition, the Schools and Libraries Element addresses these vital institutions and facilities that are the principle vehicles for the transmission of art and cultural traditions to young residents. The Parks and Recreation Element plays an essential role in providing facilities and coordinated activities for sport and recreation. Also, the Biological Resources Element recognizes the community's vested interest in and dedication to the preservation of wildlife and habitat, and as the reason many have chosen to live in Rancho Mirage.

As a source of cultural and artistic tradition, the City of Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley have a long and interesting history of human culture to draw upon, extending from Cahuilla Indian rock art, pottery and basketry, to the modern city with state-of-the-art technologies and communication systems. Today those living in Rancho Mirage encompass a wide range of artistic appreciation and cultural diversity with common roots and shared values. In an essential way, this tradition and the modern cultural sensitivity of the community is formed more than ever by the natural environment and our awareness of it. From this rich source of nourishment and inspiration the City forms its cultural and artistic foundations.

Unlike many areas of community planning, which are relatively discrete in their application to the city limits, arts and culture is more appropriately viewed on a Valley-wide basis. Residents of the City are able to enjoy cultural resources that have been supported by all Valley residents, including such facilities as the McCallum Theater, the Children's Discovery Museum and the Desert Museum. The Living Desert Preserve also provides important cultural opportunities for residents and visitors of all communities of the Coachella Valley. Within the City, an Arts in Public Places program has been established and fees are collected to support the projects being developed. These and other arts and culture issues are discussed below.

Children's Discovery Museum

Children's Discovery Museum

The City of Rancho Mirage has spearheaded the development of a museum dedicated to the cultural and artistic development of children. A joint project of the Cove Communities (Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Indian Wells) the museum is currently housed in temporary facilities in the City. Ambassador Walter Annenberg donated a site on Gerald Ford Drive for the development of the permanent museum, which is under construction. The Children's Discovery Museum is planned as a 20,000 square foot facility that will provide multi-cultural exhibits on a rotating basis, arts and crafts instruction, an auditorium for theater and musical events, and other artistic and cultural programs and activities.

Desert Museum

The Desert Museum is a fine arts and natural history museum located in Palm Springs. In addition to indoor exhibition space and instruction facilities, the Desert Museum also has an outstanding sculpture garden. This facility also houses the Annenberg Theater, which is the site of a wide array of cultural programs ranging from classical and popular music to theater and education programs. The natural history programs include dioramas of desert and mountain habitats and wildlife, rotating live animal exhibits, and a wide range of field trips and in-house education programs on the natural world. The museum is also an important repository for cultural artifacts of the Agua Caliente Indians.

Agua Caliente Museum

The Agua Caliente Tribe is currently (1996) planning the development of a tribal museum in the Palm Springs. While detailed designs have not yet been developed, plans currently call for a variety of temporary and permanent exhibit areas, collections, storage and archive, outdoor courtyard and lecture area, multipurpose room, children's room, new artist exhibit area, and an amphitheater for major outdoor events. The museum will be an important venue for the appreciation of the rich Cahuilla cultural heritage.

McCallum Theater and the Bob Hope Cultural Center

The McCallum Theater at the Bob Hope Cultural Center is a 1,200 seat performance facility located on the campus of the College of the Desert. A wide variety of cultural events are staged at this facility and range from accomplished local theater and concert performances to similar activities by world renowned performers and orchestras. A wide variety of popular music and theater are performed at this facility, which is also the venue for the annual Diana Hodges International Piano Competition.

Rancho Mirage Cultural Commission

The City's Cultural Commission develops and presents concepts to the City Council and organizes and directs subcommittees for the purpose of using the special talents of individuals within the community. Subcommittees are established for specific purposes or projects and, once completed, are dissolved. The Cultural Commission also advises City Council on the use of funds for the City's Art in Public Places program. The Commission is comprised of five commissioners and one City Councilperson who serves as Council liaison to the Commission.

BEGINNINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND APPRECIATION

Art in Public Places

Another important opportunity to express and strengthen the cultural cohesion of the community is through the placement of art in public places. In the broadest sense, and consistent with the themes of a low density resort residential community that values its mountains and wild places, public art can incorporate the use of native landscaping along major roadways, reflecting the surrounding Santa Rosa's and desert washes. It can include the thoughtful design and placement of public buildings, as well as the more conventional application of this concept, which includes placement of manmade monumental sculpture on public lands, or within the rights-of-way of major roadways.

The City has initiated an art-in-public-places program for the development of special City entry treatments and the commissioning of works for permanent display in public areas. Sites including City Hall, the City Library, as well as City-owned parks and open space lands are all appropriate locations for public art works displays. These facilities, as well as the Children's Museum, also offer important opportunities for local artists to display their work and hold workshops and master classes. The current city public facilities funding program collects fees paid at the time building permits are issued. Fees for this purpose are levied on a per square foot basis and are currently (1996) $0.022 (2.2 cents). New projects for this program are in development on an ongoing basis.

Amphitheater and Outdoor Events

Unlike many cities in the Coachella Valley, Rancho Mirage lacks a public venue for open-air amphitheater outdoor events areas for festivals, musicals and stage performances. Currently (1996), City-sponsored events are held at Whitewater Park. It is envisioned that such

a facility would be available year round for art shows, dog shows, arts festivals, and music performances in the cooler months and evening performances during the summer. As a place for picnics and the enjoyment of a wide variety of activities, including music and theater, an amphitheater and outdoor events area could be cost-effectively developed to allow large audiences to enjoy concerts ranging from bluegrass to classical music, and from local theater to Shakespeare. The development of such a facility in conjunction with the community park planned in Section 30 should be further considered.

Film and Movie Industry Museum

The City should investigate the feasibility of developing or sponsoring a film and movie industry museum in Rancho Mirage. Such a facility could serve as a keystone or anchor for a variety of other enterprises and could serve as the basis for a regional entertainment center supported by both residents and visitor. This museum could also serve as an important venue for newly released documentaries, experimental films, and competitions and festivals. The museum could focus on the science, art and history of film making and provide "exploratorium-like" environments on past, present and future technology. Spinoff opportunities should also be explored and impacts carefully assessed.

Land Use Planning As A Strategy For Cultural Resource Preservation

It has consistently been emphasized that the low density resort residential lifestyle of the community and the close association residents of Rancho Mirage have with wildlife and the environment are integral parts of the community's culture and traditions. The development of the General Plan Land Use maps has been based on several essential values embraced by the community. These include the desire to preserve open spaces to assure the long-term enjoyment of wildlands and wildlife, and to preserve and protect the cultural heritage of local Native Americans. The Land Use Plan and various elements of the General Plan take these and other special concerns into account and will play an active role in preserving these community assets for generations to come.

The preservation of wildlife and the conservation and assurance of access to open spaces and wildlands are essential parts of the cultural inheritance of Rancho Mirage. The inspiration gained from the closeness with which residents live with wildlife has enhanced appreciation for these valuable resources.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are several vehicles available to implement the Arts and Culture Element, including the integration of public art into major city entries and focal points. The City may also encourage developers to include sculpture and cultural icons into major project corners, entries and parkway treatments. In addition, as discussed below, the City may wish to consider the development of a Rancho Mirage Cultural Master Plan, which would provide a coordinated approach to making the community aware of its cultural heritage, and to establish plans for facilities, activities and events that would broaden the artistic and cultural life of the community.

Therefore, the City of Rancho Mirage should consider the preparation of a Cultural Master Plan. This plan would identify specific projects, including the Children's Museum, development of an amphitheater and outdoor events area, expanding on and encouraging additional events and fairs, and the support of artists through shows at various City facilities and elsewhere throughout the community. The Plan should also include strategies for coordination and cooperation with such groups as the Coachella Valley Watercolor Society, Desert Symphony and others to maximize their support and to minimize conflicting events.

ARTS AND CULTURE GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1

The development and prospering of the arts and culture of the City of Rancho Mirage, and enhanced access to these amenities for all residents through City and private efforts and participation.

GOAL 2

An enhanced sense of cultural awareness and identification in the City of Rancho Mirage, through cultural events, and the development of all aspects of the arts.

Policy 1
The artistic and cultural heritage of Rancho Mirage shall be enhanced through efforts to expand the available venues for fine arts and crafts, as well as music and other performance arts.

Program 1.A
Study the feasibility of developing additional exhibition space at the City Hall, the City Library and at other City locations.

Program 1.B
Study the feasibility of constructing an outdoor amphitheater and outdoor events area for festivals, musical events, plays and other performing and display arts.

Policy 2
Continue to take an active role in sponsoring cultural events and exhibitions throughout the community.

Program 2.A
The City shall pro-actively sponsor and support the development of fine arts displays and musical events, and shall encourage and promote other cultural events in the community.

Program 2.B
The City shall consider the development of a Cultural Master Plan that coordinates and maximizes the City's resources, including local artists/associations, library and Children's Museum staff, and other artistic and cultural leaders, in supporting the arts and culture of the community.

Policy 3
Pro-actively demonstrate support for the City's desert resort heritage through the integration of indigenous landscape materials and themes into major roadway streetscape treatments, and through the development of art in public places.

Program 3.A
Adopt or amend landscape architectural guidelines for major roadways that include the use of boulders, indigenous and other drought tolerant planting materials, and which are efficient in terms of water use and maintenance costs.

Program 3.B
Investigate and develop additional funding mechanisms to finance the commissioning of sculpture, monumental rock work, landscape architectural projects, and other artistic creations that are suitable for placement in public parks and rights-of-way.

Program 3.C
The City shall evaluate the feasibility of developing an interpretive center within the City.

Policy 4
The City shall include Entry Monuments as part of the Art in Public Places program.

Program 4.A
The City shall actively pursue development of a City Entry Monument.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER VII

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

ADT — Average Daily Trips. The total volume of traffic on a given road averaged over a 24-hour period.

Air Basin — A large region that shares a common geographical area and atmospheric interaction. The boundaries of an air basin are generally mountains, hills, or bodies of water.

Air Pollution Emissions — Discharges into the atmosphere, usually described in weight per unit of time for a given pollutant.

Alluvium — Soil, sand, gravel, or similar material deposited by running water, sometimes miles from its source.

Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone — Zones established under the California Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Act, which define potentially and/or recently active earthquake faults which could be hazardous to structures in the event of surface faulting or fault creep.

AQMP — Air Quality Management Plan. A plan to achieve and maintain ambient air quality standards in jurisdictions designated by the state legislature.

Aquifer — A geologic formation which stores, transmits and yields significant quantities of water to wells and springs.

Arterial Highway — A four lane divided highway for through traffic to which access from abutting properties is kept to a minimum. Minimum right-of-way shall be 100 feet.

Bikeway — Designated facilities classified, and specifically designated, constructed and intended for the use of bicycle travel.

Blowsand — An environmental condition in which quantities of sand are blown in the wind. This condition may occur in areas of loose sand or sandy loam soils and strong prevailing winds.

Buffers — Land uses which protect public safety and provide sufficient distance and barriers between incompatible land uses by lessening the effects of noise, dust, vibration, visual blight, or other impacts caused by a particular land use.

CDBG — Community Development Block Grant. Federal allocation of funds to a jurisdiction for discretionary disbursement, generally utilized for local community development projects.

CEQA California Environmental Quality Act. State legislation adopted in 1970 which ensures the protection of the environment. This legislation also required California governmental agencies at all levels to develop standards and procedures necessary to protect the environmental quality of their jurisdiction.

CNEL Community Noise Equivalent Level. The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24 hour period, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels before 7 a.m. and after 10 p.m.

Cogeneration The process of generating electricity using waste heat from an industrial, commercial, or manufacturing process.

Collector Roadway A four lane street which is intended to serve intensive residential land use, or to convey traffic through a subdivision to roads of equal or greater capacity. Minimum right-of-way is 88 feet.

Conservation The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

Contiguous Development Development which is adjacent to already existing development, even if separated by roads, streets, utility easements, and railroad rights-of-way.

CVAG Coachella Valley Association of Governments. An association of local governments that have jurisdiction within the Coachella Valley.

dbA A-weighted Sound Level. The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighted filter network. The A-weighted filter de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound in a manner similar to the response of the human ear, and gives good correlation with subjective reactions to noise.

Design Criteria Specific standards and regulations which guide the design of a project.

Earthquake A shaking or trembling of the earth's crust that is volcanic or tectonic in nature.

EIR Environmental Impact Report. An informational document used in the decision-making process which identifies the effects of a proposed project or activity on the natural and man-made environments. It must be prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and must address nine mandatory issues: project description, environmental setting, adverse environmental effects, short and long term use, irreversible environmental changes, growth inducement,

alternatives to the project, and natural and human environmental resources.

Endangered Species — A species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile or invertebrate for which the prospects of survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition or disease.

Fault — A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.

Fault Hazard Zone — A designated area of possible fault movement.

Fuel Modification Program — A fire prevention program for those developable areas surrounded by natural open space. The program should include the graduated decreases in native plan densities and the substitution of fire-resistant plants near development areas. The pattern of vegetation removal and introduction of new vegetation should be consistent with wildlife habitat conservation, thus minimizing impacts to the biological composition of the area. Provisions for continued maintenance should also be developed and implemented.

Fire Response Time — The amount of time it takes for the fire department to respond to a first alarm fire.

Floodplain — The land areas that are subject to flooding from the 100 year flood, but not including the actual floodway.

Floodway — The channel of a river or other watercourse and adjacent land areas necessary to discharge the waters from the 100 year flood without increasing the water surface elevation of that flood more than one foot at any point.

Freeway — A highway upon which the abutter's right of access is controlled and which provides separated grades at intersecting streets.

General Plan Road — Any road indicated in the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

Geothermal Resources — The natural heat of the earth, the energy in whatever form below the surface of the earth present in, resulting from, created by, or from which may be extracted natural heat, and all minerals in solution or other products in whatever form obtained from naturally heated fluids, brines, associated gases and steam, excluding oil, hydrocarbon gas or other hydrocarbon substances.

Goal — An expression of a general, ultimate ideal to be sought. It reflects basic community values and establishes the emphasis for formulating

objectives, policies and implementation measures. They are general, often timeless, and do not lend themselves to measurement.

Ground Rupture — A break in the ground's surface resulting from the movement of a fault.

Groundshaking Zone — A designated area that can be expected to experience a groundshaking intensity during a maximum probable "design" earthquake.

Groundwater — Subsurface or underground water resource.

Hazardous Waste — A waste or combination of wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment.

High Fire Hazard Areas — An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather or other fire-related condition, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.

Historic — Important, significant, famous or decisive in history.

Infilling — The building out or completion of development of an area before starting development of adjacent undeveloped lands.

Infrastructure — The physical systems and services which support development and people, such as streets and highways, transit services, airports, water and sewer systems, etc.

LAFCO — Local Agency Formation Commission. A State agency with the responsibility and authority to approve or deny (with or without modification) all proposals for the establishment (incorporation) of cities and special districts, reorganization or dislocation of them, and/or proposals to annex. The LAFCO must also establish a Sphere of Influence for cities and special districts.

Land Use Category — The classification which identifies allowable land uses for a project site, based upon the availability of public services and facilities, the adequacy of the circulation system and surrounding area development.

Landfill — A system of trash and garbage disposal in which waste is buried between layers of earth to build up low-lying land.

Ldn — Day-night sound level.

Leach Field — That portion of the septic tank system which disperses dissolved waste products into the surrounding soil.

Liquefaction — A temporary fluid condition in water-saturated loose sandy soil caused by shock, such as an earthquake. It can cause serious soil settlement, slumping, or failure of structure foundations.

Major Arterial Highway — Six lane highways designed to serve through traffic and high intensity urban land uses, with restricted access from abutting properties. Rights-of-way vary from 110 to 120 feet.

Mitigation — The lessening or elimination of the impacts of an action or project through changes in the proposed action or project, or the undertaking of additional measures.

NEPA — National Environmental Policy Act. Federal legislation passed in 1969 which insures that federal actions are not going to lessen environmental quality. This legislation also required public agencies to consider the environmental costs of their actions and provide full disclosure of environmental effects for public review and comment.

Noise Contour — A line on and passing through points exposed to the same sound level. Contours form bands of varying widths centering around a noise source.

Noise Impacted Area — The noise impact area, in square statute miles, is the total land area within the noise impact boundary less area deemed to have a compatible land use.

One Hundred Year Floodplain — The land areas that are subject to flooding from a flood caused by a storm with the statistical likelihood of occurring once in a hundred year time span.

Open Space — Land or water which is essentially unimproved.

Overdraft — The condition of a groundwater basin where the amount of water withdrawn by pumping exceeds the amount of water replenishing the basin.

Paleontology — A science that deals with the life of past geologic periods and is based on the study of fossil remains of plants or animals.

Percolation Test — Test of a soil's ability to absorb and permit seepage of sewage effluent.

Physical Constraint — A physical feature or characteristic of land which prevents or limits the development of that land.

Policy — A statement which sets forth guidelines for future action.

Prehistoric — Relating to times predating written history.

Program Series of tasks designed to implement policies set forth in the General Plan.

Rare Species A species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile or invertebrate that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may be endangered if its environment worsens.

Reclamation The combined process of land treatment that minimizes water degradation, air pollution, damage to aquatic or wildlife habitat, flooding, erosion, and other adverse effects from surface mining operations including adverse surface effects incidental to underground mines, so that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternate land uses and creates no danger to public health and safety.

Redevelopment Agency An agency comprised of City staff and/or elected officials, to supervise and allocate funds for the improvement of blighted or otherwise rundown areas of the City.

Retrofitting Supplying an existing building or facility with new equipment, parts, or features, usually in an effort to improve the efficiency of energy use.

Rights-of-way The entire width of property for the use of highways, flood and drainage works, overhead and underground utilities, or any related improvements.

Road Alignment The location of a road in relation to other roads such that they form a connected circulation system.

RSA Regional Statistical Area. A group of census tracts or districts used for economic analysis.

SCAG The Southern California Association of Governments. An association of cities providing regional demographic and legislative information for the Southern California area.

Scenic Corridor The land area outside of the highway right-of-way within the line of sight which can be realistically subjected to protective land use controls.

Seiching An earthquake-induced wave in a lake, reservoir or harbor.

Seismicity The quality or state of being of, subject to, or caused by, an earthquake.

Septic Tank A tank in which the solid matter of continuously flowing sewage is disintegrated by bacteria.

Shall Indicates an unequivocal directive.

Should Signifies a slightly less rigid directive than "shall" to be honored in the absence of compelling considerations.

Slump Soil failure resulting from a slope, which is too steep for the soil's resistance capacity, being barren and exposed to water.

Solid Waste All solid, semisolid, and liquid wastes, including garbage, trash, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles and parts thereof, discarded home and industrial appliances, manure, vegetable or animal solid and semisolid wastes, and other discarded solid and semisolid wastes.

Specific Plans A tool to implement the General Plan which details land use and circulation plans for a specific site. Specific Plans are required in sensitive areas or those designated for combined commercial and residential uses.

Spheres of Influence The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local governmental agency.

Subsidence The gradual, local settling or sinking of the earth's surface with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence is usually the result of gas, oil, or water extraction, hydro-compaction, or peat oxidation, and not the result of a landslide or slope failure.

Surface Mining All, or any part of, the process involved in the mining of minerals on mined lands by removing overburden and mining directly from the mineral deposits, open-pit mining of minerals naturally exposed, mining by the auger method, dredging and quarrying, or surface work incidental to an underground mine.

Tectonics Of or pertaining to the forces involved in, or the resulting structures or features of the upper part of the earth's crust.

Threatened Species Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Transportation Corridor The area adjacent to major transportation routes.

Trip Generators Person and vehicular travel generated in accordance with the type and intensity of land use.

Water Basin The drainage or catchment area of a stream or lake.

Watercourse A permanent stream; intermittent stream; river, brook, creek, channel or ditch for water, whether natural or manmade.

Watershed The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or which drains into a lake or reservoir.

Zoning A legal device used by local jurisdictions to control development density and insure that land uses are properly situated in relation to one another.

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

CHAPTER VIII

APPENDIX

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Program 1.A
The City Council shall, through the public hearing process, receive an annual report from the Planning Commission on the status of the General Plan and shall make recommendations which address identified inadequacies or opportunities for updating the Plan.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department
Schedule: Annually.

Program 1.B
The City shall comprehensively review and amend, as necessary, the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to maintain consistency with the General Plan.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department
Schedule: Annually

Program 2.A
Maintain application materials and guidelines for the preparation of specific plans and encourage their use for large and/or complex residential, commercial or industrial projects of twenty acres or larger and on lands contemplated for annexation into the City.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: On-going

Program 3.A
The annual review of the General Plan, as set forth in Program 1.A, above, shall include a report on interrelationships, impacts or enhancements of the General Plan with regard to the City's ability to fund public services or secure public facilities.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department
Schedule: Annually.

Program 4.A
Enter into an agreement with Riverside County and the Agua Caliente Tribal Council to review all proposed land use and other development proposals, recognize the City's advisory role, and request that the County and Tribal Council forward copies of all development plans proposed within the advisory area to the City for review and comment.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Community Development Department; City Attorney
Schedule: 1996-97; Continuous.

Program 5.A
Maintain application processing procedures that assure expeditious and timely processing of land development applications, including "fast tracking" procedures for priority development proposals.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 6.A
The City shall develop master facility plans to establish availability of, need and availability of funding for additional public services and facilities. Master plans should also include schedules for phased implementation, which shall be incorporated into the City's capital improvement programs.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Public Works Department; Community Development Department
Schedule: 1997-98; as required by development.

LAND USE ELEMENT

General Land Use

Program 2.A
The City shall adopt and maintain a Zoning Ordinance and designations that directly correspond to designations set forth in the Land Use Element, and which guide and regulate development consistent with the General Plan.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.
Schedule: 1997; Revise as needed

Program 4.A
The City shall incorporate land use and development standards into the Zoning Ordinance that permit and encourage the appropriate integration of residential uses into mix-use commercial land use areas and zoning districts.

Responsible Agency: City Council, Community Development Department.
Schedule: 1997

Program 7.A
The City's capital improvement program shall assign high priority to projects serving the City's developed and developing areas.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department; Community Development Department.
Schedule: Annually

Program 7.B
The City shall make available maps and other information showing the location of all available infrastructure.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, City Council.
Schedule: Continuous

Program 7.C
The City shall utilize Specific Plans to assure the phased, logical and cost-effective extension of infrastructure and buildout in new development.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous

Residential Land Use

Program 1.A
The City shall assign and periodically review residential land use designations to assure that related General Plan goals, including preservation of low density neighborhoods, are met.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.
Schedule: On-going; every five years.

Program 1.B
Consistently apply the City's discretionary powers and development review process to assure that subdivision and development plans are compatible with existing residential areas.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous

Program 9.A
The City shall monitor the amount of low income housing available and make best efforts to meet State requirements for providing such housing types.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Depart-ment, Redevelopment Agency.
Schedule: Continuous

Commercial Land Use

Program 1.A
Maintain the Land Use map on an on-going basis to assure sufficient lands are designated for commercial uses to support the needs of the community and surrounding areas in a manner consistent with economic opportunities and the resort residential character of the community.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous

Program 1.B
Make available market information to developers and realtors, which identifies the City's service needs and potential sites suitable for those commercial goods and services.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous

Program 3.A
The City shall implement the Highway 111 East and West Specific Plans to encourage a cohesive and coherent development pattern, which reduces fragmented development and promotes infilling.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; City Council; Redevelopment Agency
Schedule: Continuous

Industrial Land Use

Program 3.A
Prior to or concurrent with the issuance of development permits, the City shall require the develop of a Specific Plan on lands designated for industrial development, which shall address circulation, infrastructure, drainage and development standards and guidelines to assure efficient industrial development consistent with the character and quality of the community..

Responsible Agency: City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous

Program 4.A
In cooperation with property owners, Chamber of Commerce, as well as other private interests, the City shall promote development of industrial lands through coordinated joint efforts.
Responsible Agency: Private Owners; Community Development Department; Chamber of Commerce
Schedule: Continuous

Program 5.A
The City shall evaluate existing industrial and quasi-industrial land uses and encourage the formation of industrial parks appropriate for relocating existing inappropriately located industrial uses.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Redevelopment Agency, Developers
Schedule: 3-5 years

Program 6.A
As an integral part of the industrial park Specific Plan, the City shall require thoughtful site planning and extensive use of landscaping to enhance the appearance of industrial areas.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous

Program 6.B
The City shall review all industrial development proposals with a special regard for public health and safety issues to ensure that the type and intensity of the use is appropriate for the proposed location and compatible with surrounding land uses.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous

Open Space and Conservation Land Use

Program 1.A
The City shall review and update land use maps and information on the various types of open space and conservation lands in the community.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous; every five years.

Program 1.B
The City shall evaluate all development proposals and identify their impact upon and compatibility with designated open space and conservation lands.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.
Schedule: Continuous

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Program 4.A
The General Plan master traffic study shall be periodically updated to maintain its relevance and correspondence to the General Plan land use designations and the design and construction of City streets.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Public Works Department.
Schedule: Every three years.

Program 4.B
Prepare a master plan of roads, which includes standards for ultimate rights-of-way and pavement width and provides a schedule for securing right-of-way and constructing improvements needed to maintain the levels of service standards set forth in the Circulation Element.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department
Schedule: 1996-97

Program 4.C
Establish and maintain a roadways pavement management program (PMP) that sets forth bud-geting, timelines and schedules for maintenance of existing roadways in the community.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department
Schedule: 1996-97; Annually

Program 6.A
Prepare a design specifications manual which includes but is not necessarily limited standards for major roadway access restrictions and separations, median island opening separation, turning movement restrictions, turning lanes, driveways and gated entries, roadway parking restrictions, and street lighting and signage.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department
Schedule: 1997-98

Program 6.B
The City shall facilitate the consolidation of access drives along Highway 111 in a manner which minimized conflicting turning movements and maximized the use of existing and planned signalized intersections.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department, Community Development Department, Redevelop-ment Agency
Schedule: Ongoing.

Program 7.A
The City shall be represented on all regional transportation committees and shall regularly coordinate with other local agencies regarding their plans, programs and services which affect the quality and safety of the Rancho Mirage roadway system.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Public Works Department, Community Development Department, Adjoining Communities; CVAG, Sunline Transit Authority, Palm Springs Regional Airport Authority, CalTrans
Schedule: Continuous

Program 7.B
Study the need and feasibility of providing additional all-weather crossings along critical roadways, and develop and implementation plan and schedule, if appropriate
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department, Coachella Valley Water District
Schedule: 1998

Program 8.A
The City's trails master plan shall include design standards, guidelines and scheduling for facilities which provide bicycle routes to activity areas.
Responsible Agency: community Development Department, Public Works Department
Schedule: Continuous

Program 9.A
An internal circulation plan shall be prepared for the residential area north of Clancy Lane, including proposed access points on Bob Hope Drive and Monterey Avenue, and shall be incorporated into the Circulation Element of the General Plan.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Public Works Department
Schedule: 1997-98

Program 9.B
An internal circulation plan shall be prepared for the western half of Section 30, including proposed access points on major interior and exterior streets. Said plan shall be incorporated into the Circulation Element of the General Plan.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Public Works Department
Schedule: 1997-98

Housing Element

Program 1.A
The City shall monitor the remaining supply of vacant land in all residential zoning categories.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Annually.

Program 1.B
The City shall review and revise its residential development standards, as needed, to ensure that a variety of housing types are accommodated without sacrificing the City's design standards.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 1997, as part of a Zoning Ordinance update.

Program 4.A
Continue to support and assist in enforcing the provisions of the Federal Fair Housing Act. Information on the Fair Housing Act, as well as methods for responding to complaints, shall be available at City Hall.

Program 5.A
The City shall monitor existing mobile home parks, and shall consider the allocation of Housing Set-Aside funds to correct health and safety concerns as they arise.
Responsible Agency: Redevelopment Agency
Schedule: Annually.

Program 9.A
The Redevelopment Agency shall annually allocate funds to eligible projects, outlined on page III-47, Strategy for Meeting Affordable Housing Need, and other projects as they are presented to the Agency.
Responsible Agency: Redevelopment Agency
Schedule: Annually.

Program 10.A
The City shall prepare a standard set of qualifications and an application format for private developers seeking City financial assistance for the development of affordable housing.
Responsible Agency: Redevelopment and Housing Manager
Schedule: 1997

Program 13.A
The City shall prepare a conceptual site plan and a request for development proposals for a family affordable housing project on the 20 acres of City-owned property south and west of Via Vail.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Redevelopment & Housing Manager
Schedule: 1996.

Program 15.A
The Housing Authority shall provide financial assistance to lower income households through its Home Improvement Program.
Responsible Agency: Redevelopment and Housing Manager
Schedule: Continuous.

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

Program 2.A
The City shall budget for the development and maintenance of additional parks to meet the needs of existing and future residents, which includes park facilities for all age segments of the population.
Responsible Agency: City Council, Administrative Services Department, Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous

Program 7.A
Place Class II bike lane markings and signs on arterials having sufficient width.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department
Schedule: 1997

Program 9.A
The City shall inventory existing major arterial streets for missing regional bicycle route links and shall designate Class III bikeways only where Class I or II facilities are not feasible.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 1997

Program 10.A
The City shall inventory existing major arterial streets for potential Class I bikeway/sidewalks on both sides and shall program their installation.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department, Community Development Department
Schedule: 1997

Program 14.A
The City shall prepare a mountain trail plan in cooperation with other responsible agencies and organizations.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department,Trails Commission,Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bighorn Institute and the Coachella Valley Trails Council
Schedule: 1996-1997

Program 14.B
A five year trails improvement plan and budget shall be prepared and implemented, with the goal of completing trails identified on the General Plan Trails Map.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Adminis-trative Services Department, Trails Commission, City Council
Schedule: Annually

Program 14.C
The City shall participate in and encourage regional trail planning efforts and cooperate with other agencies,cities.
Responsible Agencies:
Schedule:

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Amend and maintain an appropriate comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and other regulatory documents, which define the design parameters within which public and private development projects must perform. Comprehensive application packages and document outlines shall be prepared and maintained to guide the preparation of Specific Plans, Conditional Use,

Development Plan and other permits, and assure a thorough review of all community design issues.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department
Schedule: On-going; Review annually.

Program 13.A
Scenic roadway streetscape designs, which enhance street appearance and provide safer vehicular and pedestrian movements, shall be programmed into the City's roadway capital improvements program. Said program shall also establish development guidelines to protect and enhance scenic values along these roadways.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: Immediate: On-going.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Program 1.A
The City shall monitor the remaining capacity of all General Plan land use categories to assure that a variety of economic development opportunities are available to the private sector.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Annually

Program 3.A
The City shall establish an economic development entity to develop and administer an economic development program.
Responsible Agency: City Manager's Office
Schedule: 1996-97

Program 8.A
The City shall regularly prepare a long range financial projection and evaluate its implications for maintaining the City's strong fiscal position.
Responsible Agency: Administrative Services Department
Schedule: Annually

Program 10.A
The City shall review and revise as needed its development fees, taxes and exactions required to mitigate the impact of growth.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Public Works
Schedule: Annually

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Maintain an accurate and regularly updated map and information base on sensitive plant and animal species and habitat in Rancho Mirage and its immediate surroundings.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, CVAG
Schedule: Continuous

Program 1.B
The City shall participate in the development and implementation of the Coachella Valley Multi- Species Habitat Conservation Plan with special emphasis on habitat located in the Edom Hill and Santa Rosa Mountains areas.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, CVAG
Schedule: Continuous; annual update.

Program 1.C
The City shall continue to require the preparation of wildlife surveys and, as necessary, Habitat Conservation Plans, for new development in compliance with applicable state and federal requirements.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous

Program 2.A
Prior to the adoption of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, the City shall participate in the interim project review process, as necessary, to evaluate the potential effect of development proposals on biological resources.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; CVAG
Schedule: Immediate.

Program 3.A
City shall encourage developers to salvage naturally occurring desert plant materials for incorporation into project landscaping to the greatest extent possible and indicate utilization of these indigenous materials on project landscape plans which provide or enhance

wildlife habitat and serve to extend the local desert environment into the urban design of the City. Plans shall be submitted to the City for approval.

Program 3.B
The City shall prepare a comprehensive planting materials list, which shall include native and non-native, drought tolerant trees, shrubs and groundcovers that complement the local environment, provide habitat for local wildlife, and extend the desert into the built environment. A list of prohibited plant materials shall also be prepared.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 1996-97.

Program 5.A
The City shall investigate the feasibility and appropriateness of establishing an interpretive trail system in the City's mountain preserve or other similar area to enhance the public's appreciation for the City's natural resources.
Responsible Agency:
Schedule:

Program 6.A
Provide developers direction and information on preservation and re-use of valuable top soils, and use of locally appropriate xeriscape design concepts; and discourage unnecessary clearing of native desert landscape.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 1996-97

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

Program 1.A
An archaeological and historical resources data base shall be established and maintained at City Hall, and shall incorporate information from the Eastern Information Center (EIC), focused cultural resource studies conducted in the study area, and other resources.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous; five year Element update.

Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 3.A
Maintain mapping information and similar location-oriented resources in a confidential manner and assure that only those with appropriate professional and organizational ties are provided access to these sensitive records.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 3.B
In the course of reviewing development proposals and cultural surveys that identify sensitive resources, staff shall, where appropriate, encourage in-place preservation or the recovery and preservation of materials for later study and display.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 4.A
In cooperation with local historical associations, the City shall periodically review the historical and archaeological resources of the area for possible application for status as a historical landmark or inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Periodically.

Program 4.B
The City Cultural Commission shall meet with staff and elected officials in prioritizing and proposing action on the preservation and registration of important archaeological and historical resources in the community and vicinity.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Cultural Commission.
Schedule: Continuous; with annual meetings.

WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Continue implementation of the water conservation-oriented landscape ordinance to comply with State Assembly Bill 325 (AB 325), by requiring the

use of natural and drought resistant planting materials and efficient irrigation systems.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 1.B
Coordinate and cooperate with CVWD in the continued development of educational materials and programs that encourage and facilitate water conservation throughout the community.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; CVWD
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 2.A
The City shall provide information on the use of low-flush toilets, and low-flow showerheads and faucets, and shall require the application of water conserving technologies in conformance with Section 17921.3 of the Health and Safety Code, Title 20, California Administrative Code Section 1601(b), and applicable sections of Title 24 of the State Code.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 3.A
Establish regulations and guidelines for the development and maintenance of project-specific on-site retention/ detention basins, which implement the NPDES program, enhance groundwater recharge and comple-ment regional flood control facilities, and address applicable community design policies.
Responsible Agency: Public Works, Community Development Department; CVWD
Schedule: 1996-97.

AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Participate, through CVAG and SCAQMD, in the monitoring of all air pollutants of regional concern on a continuous basis, and maintain records of trends in regional air quality.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; CVAG; SCAQMD;
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 1.B
Make available the City's Air Quality Management manual to encourage and facilitate self-regulation to the greatest extent practical. Coordinate with developers and encourage the phasing and staging of development to assure the lowest construction-related pollutant emission levels practical. The City shall impose mitigation measures, including the use of water trucks and temporary irrigation systems, as well as other measures which will effectively limit fugitive dust emissions resulting from construction or other site disturbance.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 5.A
The City Shall consider the use of CNG and electric powered vehicles, as well as other alternative and/or renewable energy sources to the extent cost-effective.
Responsible Agency: Administrative Services Department; Public Works Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 5.B
Wherever practical, the City shall use cost effective alternative energy sources for transportation.
Responsible Agency: Administrative Services Department; Public Works Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 6.A
Conduct an initial study and, as appropriate, require detailed air quality analyses for all applications which have the potential to adversely affect air quality.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 6.B
Projects with the potential to generate significant levels of air pollutants, such as manufacturing facilities and site development operations, shall be required by the City to incorporate air pollution mitigation in their design and operation, and to utilize the most advanced technological methods feasible.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 6.C
The City may monitor the effectiveness of transportation management programs of employers, which may include coordinated carpooling, off-peak shift times, employee flex-time and other components. As future demand warrants, promote and support the development of a Park-and-Ride program to decrease existing and future traffic levels within the community.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; SCAQMD
Schedule: Continuous.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Confer and coordinate with other responsible agencies to map and periodically update information on the various open space lands and facilities within the City, its SOI and immediate vicinity.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; CVAG; BLM; CDFG
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 2.A
Assess and identify appropriate areas of the community for preservation as public or private, passive and active open space for consideration for future inclusion into the City's system of Open Space and Conservation Lands.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous; minimum every five years.

Program 3.A
Confer and coordinate with the Coachella Valley Water District and utility purveyors to, as practical, integrate a multiple-use trail system that links City parks with open space and conservation areas.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Coachella Valley Water District; Coachella Valley Mountain Conservancy, CVAG; and public utility purveyors
Schedule: 1997, Continuous.

Program 4.A
Investigate and, if appropriate, participate with CVAG and its members in the establishment of a public land trust to preserve environmentally sensitive open space and conservation lands and provide a mechanism for gifts and bequests of land to the trust.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Community Development; CVAG; Coachella Valley Mountain Conservancy
Schedule: 1997-98; Continuous.

Program 4.B
Assist a public land trust or similar private non-profit entity in pursuing private funding, as well as state and federal grants, loans and other assistance for acquisition, preservation and management of open space and conservation lands.
Responsible Agency: Public Land Trust; CVAG; Coachella Valley Mountain Conservancy; City Community Development
Schedule: 1997-98, Continuous.

Program 5.A
Adopt and implement flexible development policies, standards, and guidelines, that encourage the provision of quality open space amenities within new residential subdivisions and planned developments. These policies, standards and guidelines shall be incorporated into the City Zoning Ordinance and other appropriate regulatory documents.
Responsible Agency: City Council; Community Development Department
Schedule: Immediate; Continuous.

Program 6.A
Adopt amendments to the City's comprehensive grading ordinance that protects hillsides and other open space and natural resource conservation areas, which reflect sensitivity to topographic and scenic qualities, wildlife resources, water or mineral resources and air quality.
Responsible Agency: City Council; City Planning Commission; Community Development Department
Schedule: 1997; Continuous.

ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Program 1.A
The City shall participate in the energy manage-ment and conservation efforts of Sunline Transit Authority and encourage the expanded use of compressed natural gas, buses with bike racks, and other system improvements which enhance overall energy conservation.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Sunline Transit, CVAG
Schedule: Continuous

Program 1.B
The City shall plan for and facilitate the development of a Citywide and regional bike path system to provide visitors and residents with non-vehicular alternatives for travel to work, convenience shopping, and recreating.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; CVAG; RCTC
Schedule: Continuous

Program 2.A
Community land use and transportation planning and design shall assure the provision of convenient neighborhood shopping, medical and other professional services appropriately located to minimize travel and facilitate the use of alternative means of transportation.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: 1996-97, Continuous

Program 4.A
The City shall investigate and pursue the various options available to influence or directly manage the purchasing and distribution of electrical power to the various segments of the community, including regular consultation with SCE and IID, and participation in a public power authority.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Public Works Department;City Council
Schedule: 1996-97

Program 5.A
The City shall assign land use and zoning designations to appropriate lands on Edom Hill to allow and facilitate their development as wind-farms to the extent practical, consistent with the City's standards regarding viewshed protection.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: Upon annexation

Program 5.B
The City shall support and facilitate the integration of co-generation and other energy management systems into larger industrial and commercial operations in the City as a means of enhancing operational efficiencies and providing additional opportunities for local power production.
Responsible Agencies: Public Works Department; SCE; IID; So. Cal Gas
Schedule: Continuous

Policy 5.C
The City shall, to the extent practical, monitor and regulate development in the vicinity of significant mineral resources occurring within the City, its Sphere-of-Influence and the vicinity.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department; Public Works
Schedule: Continuous.

GEOTECHNICAL ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Consult and cooperate with surrounding communities and applicable state and federal agencies, in an on-going program to improve and update the database and other information on regional geologic/seismic conditions.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Applicable state and federal agencies
Schedule: 1996-97, Continuous.

Program 2.A
Prepare an informational handout, which specifies the format and contents of geotechnical and fault investigations which must be carried out within Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, City Engineer
Schedule: Upon Annexation.

Program 2.B
Establish a cooperative arrangement with the County Geologist, the State Geologist, or contract State-Certified Geologist and/or geological engineer to review and determine the adequacy of geotechnical and fault hazard studies prepared within the City.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, City Engineer
Schedule: Immediately.

Program 4.A
The City shall establish criteria for geotechnical and fault hazard analysis within the designated Garnet Hill Fault Zone.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, City Engineer
Schedule: Upon Annexation.

Program 6.A
Encourage and cooperate with CalTrans to stabilize susceptible slopes and strengthen bridges, elevated roadways and other structures along state highways, which may be subject to failure during major seismic events, thereby isolating portions of the community from emergency aid and assistance.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CalTrans
Schedule: Immediate, Continuous.

Program 7.A
Confer and cooperate with local utility companies, Coachella Valley Water District, Palm Springs Unified School District, police and fire depart-ments, and others to coordinate education of the general public regarding appropriate action before, during and after earthquakes and other disasters.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; City Engineer; City Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; PSUSD; CVWD; Public Utilities
Schedule: 1996-97, Continuous.

FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Continue to pro-actively participate with the Coachella Valley Water District in the development and updating of Rancho Mirage Regional Master Drainage Plans, providing land use and other relevant data and information.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVWD
Schedule: Immediate; Continuous.

Program 2.A
Local regulations and guidelines shall be established and/or updated to direct the management of runoff and provide for local drainage facilities that tie into and maximize the effective use of regional drainage facilities.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department; Community Development Department, CVWD
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 2.B
Adopt or update local drainage policies and development standards that reduce the rate of runoff from developed lands, consistent with capacities of public facilities and local and regional management plans, while providing opportunities for open space enhancement and multi-use.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department; Community Development Department, CVWD
Schedule: Update every 5 years.

Program 3.A
Working with the Coachella Valley Water District, the City shall coordinate and cooperate in the filing of appropriate FEMA application materials to incrementally secure amendments to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the City, consistent with existing and proposed improvements.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVWD; FEMA
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 4.A
Confer and consult with the Coachella Valley Water District, as well as CalTrans, to assure adequate all-weather crossings/facilities at appropriate locations along Highway 111 and Interstate-10, especially those serving as emergency evacuation/access routes.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVWD; CalTrans
Schedule: Immediate, Continuous.

Program 5.A
Work closely with the Coachella Valley Water District to assure that design opportunities for enhanced open space and recreation amenities, including habitat enhancement and hiking and equestrian trails where practical, are fully explored and incorporated when designing and constructing channels, debris and detention basins, and other major drainage facilities, to the greatest extent practical.
Responsible Agencies: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVWD.
Schedule: Immediate, Continuous.

NOISE ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Expand the City's Noise Ordinance to include noise exposure thresholds triggering project- specific noise impact studies. Provide develop-ment standards and project design guidelines, which include a variety of mitigation measures which can be applied to meet City standards.

Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; City Council
Schedule: 1998

Program 1.B
Provide an outline of minimal requirements for noise studies for future development projects. Studies shall analyze project impacts and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 1996-97 Continuous.

Program 2.A
Establish and periodically update an inventory of existing significant noise sources and incompatibility areas, and develop procedures to reduce the noise effects on these areas, where economically and aesthetically feasible.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 2001; Every five years.

Program 2.B
On a project-specific basis, require the installation of soundwalls, earthen berms, wall and window noise insulation and/or other mitigation measures in areas exceeding the City's noise limit standards.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 2.C
Verify projected noise levels through noise monitoring at locations adjacent to residential and other noise sensitive areas where traffic volumes have increased by more than 30%.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Event of appropriate traffic volume increases.

Program 2.D
Develop a parkway master plan for Monterey Avenue, between Frank Sinatra and Country Club Drives, which utilizes differences in elevation, increased parkway width, mounding and/or berming, acoustically effective walls and cohesive landscape planning to address noise compatibility, and other goals and policies. Facilitate the establishment of appropriate financing mechanism for project design and development.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department, Public Works Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: 1997-99

Program 3.A
In areas subject to potentially significant noise impacts, the City shall require new development, upon construction, to demonstrate compliance with all applicable noise level limits at project completion.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Project-specific

Program 4.A
Periodically review land use patterns and the community noise environment, and amend the Land Use map as appropriate to assure reasonable land use/noise compatibility.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: Review every five years.

Program 5.A
Encourage a Citywide circulation pattern which places primary traffic loads on major arterials and preserves local neighborhood noise environments by limiting roadways to local traffic to the greatest extent practical.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department;
Schedule: Update every five years.

Program 5.B
Designate primary truck routes and clearly mark these routes through the City. Other than vehicles providing local service, construction traffic and delivery truck through-traffic shall be limited to Highway 111, Monterey Avenue, Ramon Road and Interstate-10.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CalTrans
Schedule: Update every five years.

HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Confer with the appropriate responsible agencies to determine the need for, and the appropriateness of, developing a permitting process for the establishment of facilities which manufacture, store, use or dispose of

hazardous and toxic materials within the community or adjacent areas.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; County and State Health Departments
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 2.A
Coordinate with the appropriate state and federal agencies to activate procedures for the cleanup of existing and future hazardous and toxic waste sites within the Rancho Mirage limits and its SOI..
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; State and federal EPA; County Health Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 3.A
Whenever possible, encourage the development and/or use of innovative and safe chemical compounds, technologies and facilities.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: Continuous.

Policy 3.B
Prepare and/or disseminate information and instructive education program materials for residents, including direction on the identification and proper management of household hazardous waste.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; County Health Department; Waste Management
Schedule: 1997-98; Continuous.

Program 3.C
To the extent empowered, prohibit the disposal of automotive and household hazardous and toxic materials in landfills.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department ; County Health Department; Waste Management
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 3.D
Coordinate with Waste Management of the Desert and other appropriate public and quasi-public agencies to sponsor and develop drop-off locations for hazardous or toxic household products for all Rancho Mirage residents.
Responsible Agency: Administrative Services Department; Waste Management; other appropri-ate agencies
Schedule: Immediate; Continuous.

Program 4.A
Coordinate with appropriate departments and agencies to establish transportation management and contingency emergency procedures and training programs for police, fire, medical and other organizations that would be involved in an airborne release or ground spill of hazardous and toxic materials or waste.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; City Emergency Preparedness Director; Riverside County Fire Department; Sheriff's Department; CalTrans
Schedule: Immediate; Continuous.

Program 5.A
Through the subdivision and/or development review process, the City shall encourage and/or require, to the greatest extent practical, the connection of new development to the sewage collection system of the Coachella Valley Water District.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVWD; Regional Water Quality Control Board
Schedule: 1997-98; Continuous.

Program 5.B
Cooperate to help assure that all sewage disposal systems, upon completion of their use, are properly removed from service in accordance with the requirements of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and other regulating agencies.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVWD; Regional Water Quality Control Board
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 6.A
Coordinate with appropriate agencies in the enforcement of state and federal regulations for the testing, monitoring and remediation of underground fuel storage tanks for leakage.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; County Health Department; State EPA
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 7.A
Coordinate with CVAG and its member cities to actively organize against and oppose any county, state, federal or private effort to build and/or operate hazardous or toxic waste dumps/landfills or to operate hazardous industrial processes, which cannot be mitigated and have the potential to adversely affect the City or its SOI.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: Continuous.

WATER, SEWER & UTILITIES ELEMENT

Program 3.A
The City shall prepare the preliminary engineering estimates for assessment districts for sewer installation.
Responsible Agency: Public Works Department
Schedule: As necessary.

Program 6.A
The City shall develop a list of residences and businesses not connected to the sewer system.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Coachella Valley Water District.
Schedule: 1997-98

Program 6.B
The City shall develop a financial assistance program for sewer installation in existing neighborhoods.
Responsible Agency: Redevelopment Agency; Economic Development Office.
Schedule: 1998-99

Program 8.A
The City shall investigate the feasibility of establishing a municipal electricity district, which may include acquiring ownership of electrical transmission or distribution lines and purchasing power directly from producers.
Responsible Agency: Administration Department; City Council
Schedule: 1996-97

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT

Program 1.A
The City should investigate the feasibility of creating a charter school.
Responsible Agency:
Schedule:

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ELEMENT

Program 4. A
The City shall develop and update a Community Response Plan.
Responsible Agency: Emergency Services Manager
Schedule: 1996-97 and amendments thereafter.

Program 4 .B
Adopt by reference the Riverside County Multi-Hazard Functional Plan (including future amendments) as the City's Emergency Prepared-ness Plan.
Responsible Agency: Emergency Services Manager
Schedule: 1996-97 and amendments thereafter.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Program 3.A
In updating the Zoning Ordinance, the City shall develop specific design standards and guidelines regulating the siting, location and screening of utility boxes and facilities.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department
Schedule: 1997

ARTS AND CULTURE ELEMENT

Program 1.A
Study the feasibility of developing additional exhibition space at the City Hall, the City Library and at other City locations.
Responsible Agency: Administrative Services Department; Cultural Commission
Schedule: 1996-97.

Program 1.B
Study the feasibility of constructing an outdoor amphitheater and outdoor events area for festivals, musical events, plays and other performing and display arts.

Responsible Agency: Administrative Services Department; Cultural Commission
Schedule: 1996-97

Program 2.A
The City shall pro-actively sponsor and support the development of fine arts displays and musical events, and shall encourage and promote other cultural events in the community.
Responsible Agencies: Administrative Services Department; Cultural Commission
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 2.B
The City shall consider the development of a Cultural Master Plan that coordinates and maximizes the City's resources, including local artists/associations, library and Children's Museum staff, and other artistic and cultural leaders, in supporting the arts and culture of the community.
Responsible Agencies: Administrative Services Department, Cultural Commission, local artists and associations
Schedule: Continuous.

Program 3.A
Adopt or amend landscape architectural guidelines for major roadways that include the use of boulders, indigenous and other drought tolerant planting materials, and which are efficient in terms of water use and maintenance costs.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Architectural Review Committee; Cultural Commission.
Schedule: 1996-97

Program 3.B
Investigate and develop additional funding mechanisms to finance the commissioning of sculpture, monumental rock work, landscape architectural projects, and other artistic creations that are suitable for placement in public parks and rights-of-way.
Responsible Agency: Cultural Commission
Schedule: 1996-97, Continuous.

Program 3.C
The City shall evaluate the feasibility of developing an interpretive center within the City.
Responsible Agency: Community Development Department; City Council
Schedule: 1997-98

Program 4.A
The City shall actively pursue development of a City Entry Monument.

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